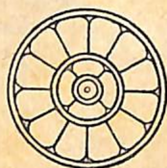
MOTHER INDIA

AUGUST 15: SRI AUROBINDO'S BIRTHDAY

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Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute:
A new light breaks upon the earth,
A new world is born.
The things that were promised are fulfilled.



MOTHER INDIA

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"Great is Truth and it shall prevail"

CONTENTS

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

(Based on the Mother's Talks to the Children of the Ashram)

Q : It was said that, from the moment the Supermind would manifest, the transforming Grace would radiate in a most effective way. Has it come true now that the Supermind has manifested?

Certainly, and I defy anybody to tell me the contrary! I say further: fortunately for the aspirants, this happy future will materialise in spite of all the obstacles that unregenerate human nature will oppose to it.

But there are impatient people who tell me: "How is it that some sadhaks have found their difficuties increased? You said once that all of us would know when the Supermind descended. Has that promise been kept?"

Perhaps I expected more from humanity than it is capable of giving me. But how do you know that the difficulties have increased and not that you have only become more conscious? All the difficulties may have been there before and you may not have known of them. If you see more clearly and if you see things that are not very pretty, it is not the fault of the Supermind, it is just your own fault. The Supermind gives you a light, a mirror in which you may see better than you have done so far, and you are annoyed because what is seen is not always pleasing. What can I do about it?

The point is this: "Is it not that the Supramental Force acts here despite the obstacles set up by unregenerate human nature?" Truly I hope it does. For otherwise there would be nothing to do, the world would never be regenerated. But things may seem more difficult to you because you are a little more aware and have caught sight of things in yourselves unseen till now.

There is yet another reason. It is that when the Force at work is stronger, insists further, naturally what resists starts resisting more in the same proportion. And if instead of being hypnotised by your little difficulties, your small inconveniences, your tiny discomforts, your big defects, you try to see the opposite side, at what point the Force is more powerful, the Grace more active, the help more tangible—in a word, if you are just a little less egoistic, less concentrated in yourselves and have a slightly larger vision in which you can include things which do not concern you personally, then perhaps your view of the problem will change.

Well, this is my advice and we shall talk of the matter again when you have tried my remedy: do not think so much of yourselves! After all, it is perhaps the problem which most interests you but it is certainly not the most interesting.

(11-7-1956)

Q : Sri Aurobindo has written: "*It is very unwise for anyone to claim prematurely to have possession of the Supermind or even to have a taste of it.*" *What is meant by claiming to have a taste of the Supermind?*

There are people who, as soon as they find a phrase in a book, in a teaching, imagine that they have realised what is mentioned. Thus when Sri Aurobindo started speaking of the Supermind in his books, everybody wrote to him: "I have seen the supramental Light, I have had a supramental experience."

Within the mind itself there are a lot of regions which are almost inaccessible to the majority of human beings, and even for those who are able to reach them they are not regions where they live in a constant manner. These people also have to make an effort of concentration to get there and they do not always arrive. Only a few rare individuals are able to do so and they speak of these levels as still mental. They do not, in dealing with their subject, breathe a word about the Supermind.

Q : It is said that the next logical stage in the evolution of Nature is the Superman. Why not a race that is intermediate?

Certainly the perfect race will not come all of a sudden. But even the first attempts, in comparison with present humanity, will show a difference great enough to give the impression that the thing is almost miraculous. Man as he is will seem altogether gross. There is no halt to the universal development, and even what appears at a certain time absolutely perfect and definitive will yet be only a stage on the way to future manifestations. But men love to sit and say: "Now I have done what I had to do." But the universe is not made like that, it does not sit down, it does not rest, it continues for ever. One can never say: "Now it is finished, I am closing the door and that is all." One can of course close the door, but then one cuts oneself off from the universal movement. Expressions are always relative, and the first being who will be no longer a human animal but begin to be a divine man will seem utterly wonderful, even if he is still very incomplete in the type of the new race. We must accustom ourselves to live in a perpetual movement.

(24-11-1954)

Q : Under what condition is there a descent of faith?

The most important condition is an almost childlike confidence, the candid confidence of a child who is sure that it will come, who does not even ask itself about it. When it has need of something it is certain of its coming.

To aspire: that is indispensable. But there are people who aspire with such a conflict within themselves, between faith and the absence of faith, between confidence and distrust, the optimism which is sure of victory and the pessimism which keeps asking when the catastrophe will fall. In such a state you may aspire but you can obtain nothing. And you say: "I have aspired and yet I have not got anything." But that is because you demolish your aspiration all the time by your lack of confidence. Children, when left to themselves, when they are not deformed by grown-ups, have so great a confidence that everything turns out well. For example, when they meet with a little accident, they never think it to be serious: they are spontaneously convinced it is going to come to a good ending, and this helps so powerfully that it does end in the right way. Now, when you aspire to the Force and ask for the aid of the Divine, if you ask with an unshakable certitude that the aid will come, that it is impossible for it not to come, then it really must come. The confidence is truly an inner opening; and there are people who are constantly in this condition; whenever there is something to receive, they are always there to do so. Others, whenever there is something to be had, some force which descends, are always absent, they are always closed at that moment. It is curious —isn't it?—that outwardly there is not much difference: they can have exactly the same goodwill, the same aspiration, the same desire to do good, but those succeed who have a smiling confidence within themselves and do not keep asking whether they will get or not get, whether the Divine will respond or not, the question does not arise, it is understood that what they need they will be given and that if they make a prayer it will be answered and that if they are in a difficulty there will be help: the help will come and not only come but manage everything. Yes, if the confidence is there, spontaneous, candid, without discussion, it will work better than anything whatever and the results will be marvellous.

It is with the contradictions and the doubts of the mind that one ruins everything—with this kind of thought that comes when one is in difficulties: "Oh, it is impossible, I shall never get to the goal, and what if matters get aggravated, if this state in which I find myself and which I don't want is going to become still worse, if I shall continue to roll down?" And thus one beats against a wall within oneself and against the force which one wishes to receive.

The psychic being has the right confidence, it has it in a wonderful manner, without a shadow, without a dispute, without a contradiction, and, when things are like that, there is not a prayer which remains unanswered, not an aspiration which stays unfulfilled.

Q: How should one rid oneself of "abhiman"?

First see at what point it is harmful, all so small, so destructive, and then take one more step and turn your own self to ridicule, see at what point you are grotesque! It is in this way one gets rid of *abhiman*. But as long as you take it seriously, as long as you legitimise the movement and there is somewhere in the mind the idea: "After all it is quite natural, I have been ill-treated and I am suffering because of that"—as long as you do this, everything is hopeless, it will never go from you.

If you begin to understand that it is a sign of weakness, inferiority, a very considerable egoism, a limitation of mind, and especially a pettiness of sentiment, a narrowness of heart, well, then you can fight. But the thought has to be in accord. You must not take the attitude: "I have been badly dealt with and I will show how I suffer." I am not going so far as to speak of people who have the spirit of vengeance more or less hidden and who say: "They have made me suffer, I will make them suffer." This becomes ugly enough for us to see and disapprove of, although it may not be always easy to resist it. It is an indication of something altogether small in one's nature. It can be very sensitive, very emotional, it can have a certain intensity, but it is very low, all coiled around one's own self.

Of course you may make use of the reason if you have one that works. And you can say something which is quite true—namely, that within the being there is only egoism that suffers and that if there is no egoism there will be no suffering and that if one wants the spiritual life one must overcome one's egoism.

So the first thing to do is to look this suffering in the face, perceive just where it is the expression of a petty egoism and then sweep the place, make it clean and say: "I want none of this dirt here, I am going to make pure my inner chamber."

Q: Are even physical sufferings due to the ego?

Physical sufferings? There is one thing certain—that they have been in the system of Nature, that they have been devised as an indicator; because, for example, if the body is disordered in some way but causes no suffering, one will never find a means to arrest the disorder. One thinks of curing a disease only

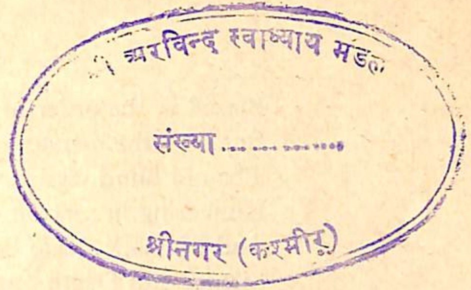
because one suffers. Thus, in the economy of Nature I think that the first aim of physical suffering is to put us on guard.

Unfortunately there is the vital which gets mixed in the business and takes a very perverse pleasure in increasing, revolving, sharpening the suffering. Then the whole system is deformed because what should be an indicator becomes at times an occasion to enjoy the malady, to render it interesting and to hold oneself up for pity—all sorts of things that cater to the vital and are all detestable. But at the origin I think it is a call of "Attention!", a danger-signal—"Look out, there is something that is not going on well!"

Only, when you are not too soft, when you have a bit of endurance and decide in yourself not to mind too much, it is remarkable how the pain diminishes. And there is quite a number of maladies or physical upsets which can be set right simply by suppressing the effect—that is to say, by checking the suffering. Generally the trouble returns since the cause is still there. If you find the cause of the disorder and act on it directly, you can get radically cured. But if you are unable to do this, you can at least make use of this influence, this control on the illness in order to suppress or eliminate it or to get a hold over it. Then it is an effect, so to speak, from without within, while the other is an effect from within without, which is much more lasting, much more complete. But the first too is considerable. For example, there are people who suffer in an unbearable way with their teeth. They are more or less what I call soft—incapable of resisting a pain or putting up with it and immediately saying: "I can't stand it, it is unendurable!" Well, this does not change the situation, it does not lessen the suffering, for it is not one's saying one does not want it that can make it go. But if you can induce for all nervous suffering a sort of immobility in yourself, an immobility of inner vibration, at the very spot that suffers, it will have the exact effect of an anaesthetic. It cuts the contact between the suffering part and the brain and if you can keep the disconnection long enough the trouble will vanish. You have to cultivate a habit of it. But you have all the time an occasion for it: you are always getting a cut or knocking yourself or having a little sore somewhere, especially in the course of your atheletics or gymnastics. Instead of stopping to observe the pain, trying to analyse it, to concentrate on it, doing whatever increases it more and more, some people think of something else; but this lasts a very short while and all of a sudden they are pulled back anew to the spot that hurts. When the hurt is there, it proves that you are in contact with the nerve which transmits the pain, otherwise you would feel nothing: well, once you know you are in contact you may gather at the place as much immobility as you can to stop the vibration of the pain; you will mark that this has the effect as if a limb were gone to sleep during an awkward position. But of course the vibration can return in a terrible manner.

If, however, in addition to the immobility you can induce a kind of inner peace and a confidence that the pain will go, I would say that it will certainly go. Out of all things, what is considered from the Yogic point of view the most difficult is toothache, because it is very close to the brain. I know that toothache can be managed to the point at which there is no suffering left at all. This does not cure the tooth-trouble, but there are instances in which one can even kill the aching nerve. Usually a nerve in the tooth is touched by caries and it begins to protest with all its might. Then if you get to establishing immobility there, you prevent its vibration, you stop its protesting. And what is remarkable, if you do this constantly, with perseverance, the sick nerve dies and you suffer no longer. For it is the nerve that suffers and when it dies it does not suffer any more. Try the cure—but of course I hope you will never have toothache!

(17-11-1954)



URVASIE *

SRI AUROBINDO

PURURAVUS from converse held with Gods
On unseen crests of Nature high, occult,
Traversed the tumult of the flame-tossed seas
That cast their fire between the spirit's poles.
Alone like a bright star twixt earth and heaven,
He reached the crossways of infinity.[1]
A Soul to our apparent life reborn
Out of the vastness of the original Self,
Journeying in dim momentous solitude
Led by the flickering of uncertain suns,
He essayed the fringe of Night's tremendous home.
Before him lay the subtle realm of light
Our organed sense conceals, the light that gleams
Across the sealless musings of the seer
A slumberless wide eye upon our scene.
Attracted[2] to earth's darkly pregnant dream
He tarried not on these mysterious shores
But still descended the divine abyss
To new adventure in the eternal Night,
Transgressed the wonder-line of things beyond
Abruptly into mortal space and time.
A universe appeared of difficult birth,
The labour of eclipsed and ignorant gods,
An immortality of chance and change.
Bridging the gulf between antagonist planes
He saw the circles of Heaven's rash advance,
Sun upon sun, God's sentinels in the void,
Life's radiant and immeasurable camp

* Fragment of a projected recast of an early narrative poem.

[1] eternity.

[2] But destined.

Blazed in the order of the aeonic Will.
But with the menace of the dragon depths
The old blind vigilant Nescience stretched afar
Hungering in serpent dumb infinitude,
And her dark shade besieged the luminaries.
Silence and Death opposed the invading Fire.
And even before he broke into our pale
There came on him a breath from tarnished worlds.
Averse from an obscure material touch
The images of the supernal realms[1]
That he had left sank from the front of thought
And held their session in the heart's dumb cave.
The glory and grace, the light, the sacred life
Receded as behind a burning door:
Subliminal beneath the lid of mind
The grandeur and the passion and the calm.
His mind became a beat of memory.
Sight, hearing changed towards our diminished scale;
The little views grew great, the great grew small.
As yet some largeness was of inmost things
And he remembered in the formless sense
Proud kingdoms of intense and beautiful life
And love left free to do his absolute will
And dreams at once commuted into power.
Affronting many starfields of our space
And shortening ever the vast lens of Time
He met a smaller movement of desire
Prisoned in the orbit of a few pale globes
And knew in front our little solar belt
Hung casually among the giant stars.
Then[2] earth received him mid her living forms.
Her deep inconscient motions packed and mute,
Her darknesses more wise than her small lights
Oppressed again his young divinity.

[1] fields.
[2] Our.

CORRESPONDENCE WITH SRI AUROBINDO

The Spiritual Force

21-6-1936

Myself: I tried hard to write a poem, but failed in spite of prayer and call. Then I wrote to you to send me some Force. Before the letter had reached you, lo, the miracle was done! Can you explain the process? Simply the writing has helped to establish the contact with the Force?

Sri Aurobindo: I usually read your soul-stirring communications (medical or other) at 7.30 or 8 or thereabouts. This one I must have got only after 10 p.m. But that makes no difference. The call for the Force is very often sufficient, not absolutely necessary that it should reach my physical mind first. Many get as soon as they write—or (if they are outside), when the letter reaches the atmosphere.

Yes, it is the success in establishing the contact that is important. It is a sort of hitching on or getting hold of the invisible button or whatever you like to call it.

Myself: Sometimes "the Force that is always operating" is not enough for me. You have to leave all relaxed repose and sit up and regain curvilinear proportions and send a dose! This is what must have happened today.

Sri Aurobindo: It is enough if you hitch on to the operating Force which is always rotating or hanging about over your head or over my head or over the general head of the Ashram or the (terrestrial) universe. It does not much matter where you hitch on, so long as you somehow do it; but in this case there may have been some connection with my curvilinear recovery which took place somewhere about 9.30. But if so, it can only have been because the Force rotated more forcibly by the impulsion of my recovery, for the conscious sending of Force to you took place only when I was reading the letter.

Myself: When you send the Force, is there a time limit for its functioning or does it work itself out in the long run or get washed off after a while, finding the *Adhar* unreceptive?

SRI AUROBINDO: There is no time limit. I have known cases in which I have put a Force for getting a thing done and it seemed to fail damnably at the moment; but after two years everything carried itself out in exact detail and order just as I had arranged it, although I was thinking no more at all of the matter. You ought to know but I suppose you don't that "Psychic" Research in Europe has proved that all so-called "psychic" communications can sink into the consciousness without being noticed and turn up long afterwards. It is like that with the communication of Force also.

NIRODBARAN

THE SECRET OF THE VEDA

CHAPTER XIX

THE VICTORY OF THE FATHERS

SRI AUROBINDO

THE hymns addressed by the great Rishi Vamadeva to the divine Flame, to the Seer-Will, Agni are among the most mystic in expression in the Rig-veda and though quite plain in their sense if we hold firmly in our mind the system of significant figures employed by the Rishis, will otherwise seem only a brilliant haze of images baffling our comprehension. The reader has at every moment to apply that fixed notation which is the key to the sense of the hymns; otherwise he will be as much at a loss as a reader of metaphysics who has not mastered the sense of the philosophical terms that are being constantly used or, let us say, one who tries to read Panini's Sutras without knowing the peculiar system of grammatical notation in which they are expressed. We have, however, already enough light upon this system of images to understand well enough what Vamadeva has to tell us about the great achievement of the human forefathers.

In order to hold clearly in our minds at the start what that great achievement was we may put before ourselves the clear and sufficient formulas in which Parashara Shaktya expresses them. "Our fathers broke open the firm and strong places by their words, yea, the Angirasas broke open the hill by their cry; they made in us the path to the great heaven; they found the Day and Swar and vision and the luminous Cows", *cakrur divo bṛhato gātum asme, ahaḥ svar vividuḥ ketum usrāḥ*, (I.71-2). This path, he tells us, is the path which leads to immortality; "they who entered into all things that bear right fruit formed a path towards the immortality; earth stood wide for them by the greatness and by the Great Ones, the mother Aditi with her sons came (or, manifested herself) for the upholding" (I. 72-9).[1] That is to say, the physical being visited by the greatness of the infinite planes above and by the power of the great godheads who reign on those planes breaks its limits, opens out to the Light and is upheld

[1] *A ye viśva svapatyāni tasthuḥ kṛṇvānāso amṛtatvāya gātum; mahnā mahadbhiḥ pṛthivī vi tasthe māta poutrair aditir dhāyase veḥ.*

in its new wideness by the infinite Consciousness, mother Aditi, and her sons, the divine Powers of the supreme Deva. This is the Vedic immortality.

The means of this finding and expanding are also very succinctly stated by Parashara in his mystic, but still clear and impressive style. "They held the truth, they enriched its thought; then indeed, aspiring souls (*āryaḥ*), they, holding it in thought, bore it diffused in all their being, *dadhān ṛtam dhanayans asya dhītim, ād id aryo didhiṣvo vibhṛtrāḥ*, (I. 71-3). The image in *vibhṛtrāḥ* suggests the upholding of the thought of the Truth in all the principles of our being or, to put it in the ordinary Vedic image, the seven-headed thought in all the seven waters, *apsu dhiyam dhiṣe*, as we have seen it elsewhere expressed in almost identical language; this is shown by the image that immediately follows, —"The doers of the work go towards the unthirsting (waters) which increase the divine births by the satisfaction of delight," *atṛsyantir apaso yanti acchā, devan janma prayasa vardhayantiḥ*. The sevenfold Truth-consciousness in the satisfied sevenfold Truth-being increasing the divine births in us by the satisfaction of the soul's hunger for the Beatitude, this is the growth of immortality. It is the manifestation of that trinity of divine being, light and bliss which the Vedantins afterwards called Sachchidananda.

The sense of this universal diffusion of Truth and the birth and activity of all the godheads in us assuring a universal and immortal life in place of our present limited mortality is made yet clearer by Parashara in I. 68. Agni, the divine Seer-Will, is described as ascending to heaven and unrolling the veil of the nights from all that is stable and all that is mobile, "when he becomes the one God encompassing all these godheads with the greatness of his being. Then indeed all accept and cleave to the Will (or the Work) when, O godhead, thou art born a living soul from the dryness (i.e. from the material being, the desert, as it is called, unwatered by the streams of the Truth); all enjoy godhead attaining to the truth and the immortality by their movements, *bhajanta viśve devatvam nāma, ṛtam sapanto amṛtam evaiḥ*. The impulse of the Truth, the thinking of the Truth becomes a universal life, (or pervades all the life) and in it all fulfil their workings," *ṛtasya preṣā ṛtasya dhītir, viśvāyur viśve apānsi cakruḥ* (Riks 1, 2, 3).

And in order that we may not, haunted by the unfortunate misconstruction of the Veda which European scholarship has imposed on the modern mind, carry with us the idea of the seven earthly rivers of the Punjab into the superterrestrial achievement of the human forefathers, we will note what Parashara in his clear and illuminating fashion tells us about the seven rivers. "The fostering cows of the Truth (*dhenavaḥ*, an image applied to the rivers, while *gāvaḥ* or *usrāḥ* expresses the luminous cows of the Sun) nourished him, lowing, with happy udders, enjoyed in heaven; obtaining right thinking as a boon from the

supreme (plane) the rivers flowed wide and evenly over the hill; *ṛtasya hi dhenavo vāvaśanāḥ, smadūdhnīḥ pīpayanta dyubhaktāḥ; parāvataḥ sumatim bhikśamāṇā, vi sindhavaḥ samayā sasrur adrim,* (I. 73-6). And in I. 72-8, speaking of them in a phrase which is applied to the rivers in other hymns, he says "The seven mighty ones of heaven, placing aright the thought, knowing the Truth, discerned in knowledge the doors of felicity; Sarama found the fastness, the wideness of the luminous cows; thereby the human creature enjoys the bliss," *svādhyo diva ā sapta yahvīḥ, rāyo duro vi ṛtajñā ajānan; vidad gavyam saramā dṛdham ūrvam, yenā nu kam mānuṣī bhojate vit.* These are evidently not the waters of the Punjab, but the rivers of Heaven, the streams of the Truth,[1] goddesses like Saraswati, who possess the Truth in knowledge and open by it the doors of the beatitude to the human creature. We see here too what I have already insisted on, that there is a close connection between the finding of the Cows and the outflowing of the Rivers; they are parts of one action, the achievement of the truth and immortality by men, *ṛtam sapanto amṛtam evaiḥ.*

It is now perfectly clear that the achievement of the Angirasas is the conquest of the Truth and the Immortality, that Swar called also the great heaven, *bṛhat dyauḥ,* is the plane of the Truth above the ordinary heaven and earth which can be no other than the ordinary mental and physical being; that the path of the great heaven, the path of the Truth created by the Angirasas and followed by the hound Sarama is the path to the Immortality, *amṛtatvāya gātum* (I. 78-9); that the vision (*ketu*) of the Dawn, the Day won by the Angirasas, is the vision proper to the Truth-consciousness; that the luminous cows of the Sun and Dawn wrested from the Panis are the illuminations of this Truth-consciousness which help to form the thought of the Truth, *ṛtasya dhītiḥ,* complete in the seven-headed thought of Ayasya; that the Night of the Veda is the obscured consciousness of the mortal being in which the Truth is subconscient, hidden in the cave of the hill; that the recovery of the lost sun lying in this darkness of Night is the recovery of the sun of Truth out of the darkened subconscient condition; and that the downflowing earthward of the seven rivers must be the outstreaming action of the sevenfold principle of our being as it is formulated in the Truth of the divine or immortal existence. Equally then must the Panis be the powers that prevent the Truth from emerging out of the subconscient condition and that constantly strive to steal its illuminations from man and throw him back into the Night, and Vritra must be the power that obstructs and prevents the free movement of the illumined rivers of the

[1] Note that in I. 32-8, Hiranyastupa Angirasa describes the waters released from Vritra as "ascending the mind", *manoruhāṇāḥ,* and elsewhere they are called the waters that have the knowledge, *āpo vicetasaḥ* (I. 83-1).

Truth, obstructs the impulsion of the Truth in us, *ṛtasya preśa*, the luminous impulsion, *dyumatīm iśam* (VII. 5-8), which carries us beyond the Night to the immortality. And the gods, the sons of Aditi, must be on the contrary the luminous divine powers, born of the infinite consciousness Aditi, whose formation and activity in our human and mortal being are necessary for our growth into the godhead, into the being of the Deva (*devatvam*) which is the Immortality. Agni, the truth-conscious seer-will, is the principal godhead who enables us to effect the sacrifice; he leads it on the path of the Truth, he is the warrior of the battle, the doer of the work, and his unity and universality in us comprehending in itself all the other godheads is the basis of the Immortality. The plane of the Truth to which we arrive is his own home and the own home of the other gods, and the final home also of the soul of man. And this immortality is described as a beatitude, a state of infinite spiritual wealth and plenitude, *ratna*, *rayi*, *vāja*, *rādhas*, etc. the opening doors of our divine home are the doors of the felicity, *rāyo duraḥ*, the divine doors which swing wide open to those who increase the Truth (*ṛtāvṛdhaḥ*) and which are discovered for us by Saraswati and her sisters, by the seven Rivers, by Sarama; to them and to the wide pasture (*kṣetra*) in the unobstructed and equal infinities of the vast Truth Brihaspati and Indra lead upward the shining Herds.

With these conceptions clearly fixed in our minds we shall be able to understand the verses of Vamadeva which only repeat in symbolic language the substance of the thought expressed more openly by Parashara. It is to Agni the Seer-Will that Vamadeva's opening hymns are addressed. He is hymned as the friend or builder of man's sacrifice who awakes him to the vision, the knowledge (*ketu*), *sa cetayan manuṣo yajñabandhuḥ* (IV. 1-9); so doing, "he dwells in the gated homes of this being, accomplishing; he, a god, has come to be the means of accomplishment of the mortal," *sa kṣeti asya duryāsu sādhan, devo martasya sadhanitvam āpa*. What is it that he accomplishes? The next verse tells us. "May this Agni lead us in his knowledge towards that bliss of him which is enjoyed by the gods, that which by the thought all the immortals created and Dyauspita the father out-pouring the Truth"; *sa no agnir nayatu prajānan, acchā ratnam devabhaktam yad asya; dhiyā yad viśve amṛta akṛṇvan, dyauṣpitā janitā satyam ukṣan*. This is Parashara's beatitude of the Immortality created by all the powers of the immortal godhead doing their work in the thought of the Truth and in its impulsion, and the out-pouring of the Truth is evidently the out-pouring of the waters as is indicated by the word *ukṣan*, Parashara's equal diffusion of the seven rivers of the truth over the hill.

Vamadeva then goes on to tell us of the birth of this great, first or supreme force, Agni, in the Truth, in its waters, in its original home. "He was born, the

first, in the waters, in the foundation of the vast world (Swar), in its womb, (i.e. its seat and birthplace, its original home); without head and feet, concealing his two extremities, setting himself to his work in the lair of the Bull" (Rik 11). The Bull is the Deva or Purusha, his lair is the plane of the Truth, and Agni the Seer-Will, working in the Truth-consciousness, creates the worlds; but he conceals his two extremities, his head and feet; that is to say, his workings act between the superconscient and the subconscient in which his highest and his lowest states are respectively concealed, one in an utter light, the other in an utter darkness. From that he goes forth as the first and supreme force and is born to the Bull or the Lord by the action of the seven powers of the Bliss, the seven Beloved. "He went forward by illumined knowledge as the first force, in the seat of the Truth, in the lair of the Bull, desirable, young, full in body, shining wide; the seven Beloved bore him to the Lord" (Rik 12).

The Rishi then comes to the achievement of the human fathers, *asmākam atra pitaro manuṣyāḥ, abhi pra sedur ṛtam āśuṣāṇaḥ*: "Here our human fathers seeking possession of the Truth went forward to it; the bright cows in their covering prison, the good milkers whose pen is in the rock they drove upward (to the Truth), the Dawns answered their call. They rent the hill asunder and made them bright; others all around them declared wide this (Truth) of theirs; drivers of the herds they sang the hymn to the doer of works (Agni), they found the light, they shone in their thoughts (or, they accomplished the work by their thoughts). They with the mind that seeks the light (the cows, *gavyatā manasā*) rent the firm and compact hill that environed the luminous cows; the souls that desire opened by the divine word, *vacasā daivyena*, the firm pen full of the kine" (Riks 13, 14, 15). These are the ordinary images of the Angiras legend, but in the next verse Vamadeva uses a still more mystic language. "They conceived in mind the first name of the fostering cows, they found the thrice seven supreme (seats) of the Mother; the females of the herd knew that and they followed after it; the ruddy one was manifested by the victorious attainment (or, the splendour) of the cow of Light," *te manvata prathamam nāma dhenos triḥ sapta mātuḥ paramāṇi vindan; taj jānatir abhyanūṣata vrā, āvir-bhuvad aruṇīr yaśasā goḥ*. The Mother here is Aditi, the infinite consciousness, who is the *Dhenu* or fostering Cow with the seven rivers for her sevenfold streaming as well as *Gau* the Cow of Light with the Dawns for her children; the Ruddy One is the divine Dawn and the herd or rays are her dawning illuminations. The first name of the Mother with her thrice seven supreme seats, that which the dawns or mental illuminations know and move towards, must be the name or deity of the supreme Deva, who is infinite being and infinite consciousness and infinite bliss, and the seats are the three divine worlds,

called earlier in the hymn the three supreme births of Agni, Satya, Tapas and Jana of the Puranas, which correspond to these three infinities of the Deva and each fulfils in its own way the sevenfold principle of our existence: thus we get the series of thrice seven seats of Aditi manifested in all her glory by the opening out of the Dawn of Truth.[1] Thus we see that the achievement of the Light and Truth by the human fathers is also an ascent to the Immortality of the supreme and divine status, to the first name of the all-creating infinite Mother, to her thrice seven supreme degrees of this ascending existence, to the highest levels of the eternal hill (*sānu, adri*).

This immortality is the beatitude enjoyed by the gods of which Vamadeva has already spoken as the thing which Agni has to accomplish by the sacrifice, the supreme bliss with its thrice seven ecstasies (I.20-7). For he proceeds: "Vanished the darkness, shaken in its foundation; Heaven shone out (*rocata dyauḥ*, implying the manifestation of the three luminous worlds of Swar, *divo rocanani*); upward rose the light of the divine Dawn; the Sun entered the vast fields (of the Truth) beholding the straight things and the crooked in mortals. Thereafter indeed they awoke and saw utterly (by the sun's separation of the straight from the crooked, the truth from the falsehood); then indeed they held in them the bliss that is enjoyed in heaven, *ratnam dhāryanta dyubhaktam*. Let all the gods be in all our homes, let there be the truth for our thought, O Mitra, O Varuna", *viśve viśvāsu duryāsu devā, mitra dhiye varuṇa stytam astu* (Riks 17, 18). This is evidently the same idea as has been expressed in different language by Parashara Shaktya, the pervasion of the whole existence by the thought and impulse of the Truth and the working of all the godheads in that thought and impulsion to create in every part of our existence the bliss and the immortality.

The hymn closes thus: "May I speak the word towards Agni shining pure, the priest of the offering, greatest in sacrifice who brings to us the all; may he press out both the pure udder of the Cows of Light and the purified food of the plant of delight (the Soma) poured out everywhere. He is the infinite being of all the lords of sacrifice (the gods) and the guest of all human beings; may Agni accepting into himself the increasing manifestation of the gods, knower of the births, be a giver of happiness" (Rik 19).

In the second hymn of the fourth Mandala we get very clearly and suggestively the parallelism of the seven Rishis who are the divine Angirasas and

[1] The same idea is expressed by Medhatithi Kanwa (I.20-7) as the thrice seven ecstasies of the Beatitude, *ratnāni triḥ saptāni*, or more literally, the ecstasies in their three series of seven, each of which the Ribhus bring out in their separate and complete expression, *ekam ekam suśastivhiḥ*.

the human fathers. The passage is preceded by four verses, IV. 2-11, 14, which bring in the idea of the human seeking after the Truth and the Bliss. "May he the knower discern perfectly the Knowledge and the Ignorance, the wide levels and the crooked that shut in mortals; and O God, for a bliss fruitful in offspring, lavish on us Diti and protect Aditi." This eleventh verse is very striking in its significance. We have the opposition of the Knowledge and the Ignorance familiar to Vedanta; and the Knowledge is likened to the wide open levels which are frequently referred to in the Veda; they are the large levels to which those ascend who labour in the sacrifice and they find there Agni seated self-blissful (V. 7-5); they are the wide being which he makes for his own body (V. 4-6), the level wideness, the unobstructed vast. It is therefore the infinite being of the Deva to which we arrive on the plane of the Truth, and it contains the thrice seven supreme seats of Aditi the Mother, the three supreme births of Agni within the Infinite, *anante antaḥ* (IV. 1-7). The Ignorance on the other hand is identified with the crooked or uneven levels[1] which shut in mortals and it is therefore the limited, divided mortal existence. Moreover it is evident that the Ignorance is the Diti of the next half-verse, *ditim ca rāsva aditim uruṣya*, and the Knowledge is Aditi. Diti, called also Danu, means division and the obstructing powers or Vritras are her children, Danus, Danavas, Daityas, while Aditi is existence in its infinity and the mother of the gods. The Rishi desires a bliss fruitful in offspring, that is in divine works and their results and this is to be effected through the conquest of all the riches held in itself by our divided mortal being but kept from us by the Vritras and Panis and through the holding of them in the infinite divine being. The latter is to be in us protected from the ordinary tendency of our human existence, from subjection to the sons of Danu or Diti. The idea is evidently identical with that of the Isha Upanishad which declares the possession of the Knowledge and the Ignorance, the unity and the multiplicity in the one Brahman as the condition for the attainment of Immortality.

We then come to the seven divine seers. "The seers unconquered declared the Seer (the Deva, Agni) holding him within in the homes of the human being; thence (from this embodied human being) mayst thou, O Agni, aspiring by the work *(aryaḥ)*, behold by thy advancing movements these of whom thou must have the vision, the transcendent ones (the godheads of the Deva)"; *kavim śa-śāsuḥ kavayo adabdhāḥ, nidhārayanto duryāsu āyoḥ; atas tvam dṛśyan agna etān,*

[1] *Cittim acittim cinavad vi vidvān, pṛṣṭheva vītā vṛjinā ca martān. Vṛjinā* means crooked, and is used in the Veda to indicate the crookedness of the falsehood as oposed to the open straightness of the Truth, but the poet has evidently in his mind the verbal sense of *vṛj*, to separate, screen off, and it is this verbal sense in the adjective that governs *martān.*

paḍbhiḥ paśyer adbhutān arya evaiḥ (Rik 12). This is again the journey to the vision of the Godhead. "Thou, O Agni, youngest power, art the perfect guide (on that journey) to him who sings the word and offers the Soma and orders the sacrifice; bring to the illumined who accomplishes the work the bliss with its vast delight for his increasing, satisfying the doer of the work (or, the man, *carṣaṇiprāḥ*). Now, O Agni, of all that we have done with our hands and our feet and our bodies the right thinkers (the Angirasas) make as it were thy chariot by the work of the two arms (Heaven and Earth, *bhurijoḥ*); seeking to possess the Truth they have worked their way to it (or won control of it)," *ṛtam yemuḥ sudhya āśuṣāṇāḥ* (Riks 13, 14). "Now as the seven seers of Dawn, the Mother, the supreme disposers (of the sacrifice), may we beget for ourselves the gods; may we become the Angirasas, sons of Heaven, breaking open the wealth-filled hill, shining in purity" (Rik 15). We have here very clearly the seven divine Seers as the supreme ordainers of the world-sacrifice and the idea of the human being "becoming" these seven Seers, that is to say, creating them in himself and growing into that which they mean, just as he becomes the Heaven and Earth and the other gods or, as it is otherwise put, begets or creates or forms (*ian, kṛ, tan*) the divine births in his own being.

Next the example of the human fathers is given as the original type of this great becoming and achievement. "Now also, even as our supreme ancient fathers, O Agni, seeking to possess the Truth, expressing the Word, travelled to the purity and the light; breaking open the earth (the material being) they uncovered the ruddy ones (the Dawns, the Cows); perfected in works and in light, seeking the godheads, gods, forging the Births like iron (or, forging the divine births like iron), making Agni a pure flame, increasing Indra, they attained and reached the wideness of the Light (of the Cows, *gavyam ūrvam*). As if herds of the Cow in the field of riches, that was manifested to vision which is the Births of the Gods within, O puissant One; they both accomplished the wide enjoyments (or, longings) of mortals and worked as aspirers for the increase of the higher being;" *ā yūtheva kṣumati paśvo, akhyad devānām yaj janimāni anti ugra; martānām cid ūrvaśīr akṛpraṇ, vṛdhe cid arya uparasya āyoḥ*, (Riks 16, 17, 18). Evidently, this is a repetition in other language of the double idea of possessing the riches of Diti, yet safeguarding Aditi. "We have done the work for thee, we have become perfect in works, the wide-shining Dawns have taken up their home in the Truth (or, have robed themselves with the Truth), in the fullness of Agni and his manifold delight, in the shining eye of the god in all his brightness" (Rik 19).

The Angirasas are again mentioned in IV. 3. 11, and some of the expressions which lead up to this verse, are worth noting; for it cannot be too often repeated that no verse in the Veda can be properly understood except by

reference to its context, to its place in the thought of the Sukta, to all that precedes and all that follows. The hymn opens with a call to men to create Agni who sacrifices in the truth, to create him in his form of golden light (*hiraṇya-rūpam*, the gold being always the symbol of the solar light of the Truth, *ṛtam-jyotiḥ*) before the Ignorance can form itself, *purā tanayitnor acittāt* (IV. 3-1). The god is asked to awaken to the work of man and the truth in him as being himself "the Truth-conscious who places aright the thought", *ṛtasya bodhi ṛtacit svādhīḥ* (IV. 3-4),—for all falsehood is merely a wrong placing of the Truth. He is to refer all fault and sin and defect in man to the various godheads or divine powers of the Divine Being so that it may be removed and the man declared finally blameless before the Infinite Mother—*aditaye anāgasaḥ* (I. 24-15), or for the infinite existence, as it is elsewhere expressed.

Then in the ninth and tenth verses we have, expressed in various formulas, the idea of the united human and divine existence, Diti and Aditi, the latter founding, controlling and flooding with itself the former. "The Truth controlled by the Truth I desire (i.e. the human by the divine), together the unripe things of the Cow and her ripe and honeyed yield (again the imperfect human and the perfect and blissful divine fruits of the universal consciousness and existence); she (the cow) being black (the dark and divided existence, Diti) is nourished by the shining water of the foundation, the water of the companion streams (*jāmaryeṇa payasā*) By the Truth Agni the Bull, the Male, sprinkled with the water of its levels, ranges unquivering, establishing wideness (wide space or manifestation); the dappled Bull milks the pure shining teat." The symbolic opposition between the shining white purity of the One who is the source, seat, foundation and the variegated colouring of the Life manifested in the triple world is frequent in the Veda; this image of the dappled Bull and the pure-bright udder or source of the waters only repeats therefore, like the other images, the idea of the multiple manifestations of the human life purified, tranquillised in its activities, fed by the waters of the Truth and the Infinity.

Finally, the Rishi proceeds to the coupling, which we so repeatedly find, of the luminous Cows and the Waters. "By the Truth the Angirasas broke open and hurled asunder the hill and came to union with the Cows; human souls, they took up their dwelling in the blissful Dawn, Swar became manifest when Agni was born. By Truth the divine immortal waters, unoppressed, with their honeyed floods, O Agni, like a horse breasting forward in its gallopings ran in an eternal flowing" (Riks 11, 12). These four verses in fact are meant to give the preliminary conditions for the great achievement of the Immortality. They are the symbols of the grand Mythus, the mythus of the Mystics in which they hid their supreme spiritual experience from the profane and, alas! effectively enough from their posterity. That they were secret symbols, images

meant to reveal the truth which they protected but only to the initiated, to the knower, to the seer, Vamadeva himself tells us in the most plain and emphatic language in the last verse of this very hymn; "All these are secret words that I have uttered to thee who knowest, O Agni, O Disposer, words of leading, words of seer-knowledge that express their meaning to the seer,—I have spoken them illumined in my words and my thinkings;" *etā viśva viduṣe tūbhyam vedho, nīthāni agne niṇyā vacānsi; nivacanā kavaye kāvyāni, aśaniṣam matibhir vipra ukthaiḥ* (IV. 3-16). Secret words that have kept indeed their secret ignored by the priest, the ritualist, the grammarian, the pandit, the historian, the mythologist, to whom they have been words of darkness or seals of confusion and not what they were to the supreme ancient forefathers and their illumined posterity, *niṇyā vacānsi nīthāni nivacanā kāvyāni.*

A GREAT MIND, A GREAT WILL

SRI AUROBINDO

(This article which first appeared in "The Independent" on August 5, 1920, was sent by Sri Aurobindo in the form of a telegram at the request of that journal's editor Bepin Chandra Pal on the occasion of Lokamanya Tilak's death on August 1 of that year.)

A GREAT mind, a great will, a great and pre-eminent leader of men has passed away from the field of his achievement and labour. To the mind of his country Lokamanya Tilak was much more, for he had become to it a considerable part of itself, the embodiment of its past efforts and the head of its present struggle for a free and greater life. His achievement and personality have put him amidst the first rank of historic and significant figures. He was one who built much rapidly out of little beginnings, a creator of great things out of an unworked material. The creations he left behind him were a new and strong and self-reliant national spirit, the reawakened political mind and life of a people, a will to freedom and action, a great national purpose. He brought to his work extraordinary qualities, a calm, silent, unflinching courage, an unwavering purpose, a flexible mind, a forward-casting vision of possibilities, an eye for the occasion, a sense of actuality, a fine capacity of democratic leadership, a diplomacy that never lost sight of its aim and pressed towards it even in the most pliant turns of its movement, and guiding all, a single-minded patriotism that cared for power and influence only as a means of service to the Motherland and a lever for the work of her liberation. He sacrificed much for her and suffered for her repeatedly and made no ostentation of his suffering and sacrifices. His life was a constant offering at her altar and his death has come in the midst of an unceasing service and labour.

The passing of this great personality creates a large and immediate void that will be felt acutely for a time, but it is the virtue of his own work that this vacancy must very soon be filled by new men and new forces. The spirit he created in the country is of that sincere, real and fruitful kind that cannot consent to cease or to fail, but must always throw up minds and capacities that will embody its purpose. It will raise up others of his mould, if not of his stature, to meet its needs, its demands, its call for ability and courage. He himself has only passed behind the veil, for death and not life is the illusion. The strong spirit that dwelt within him ranges now freed from our human and physical

limitations, and can still shed upon us, on those now at work, and those who are coming, a more subtle, ample and irresistible influence; and even if this were not so, an effective part of him is still with us. His will is left behind in many to make more powerful and free from hesitations the national will he did so much to create, the growing will whose strength and single wholeness are the chief conditions of the success of the national effort. His courage is left behind in numbers to fuse itself into and uplift and fortify the courage of his people; his sacrifice and strength in suffering are left with us to enlarge themselves, more even than in his life-time, and to heighten the fine and steeled temper our people need for the difficult share that still lies before their endeavour. These things are his legacy to his country, and it is in proportion as each man rises to the height of what they signify that his life will be justified and assured of its recompense.

Methods and policies may change but the spirit of what Lokamanya Tilak was and did remains and will continue to be needed, a constant power in others for the achievement of his own life's grand and single purpose. A great worker and creator is not to be judged only by the work he himself did, but also by the greater work he made possible. The achievement of the departed leader has brought the Nation to a certain point. Its power to go forward from and beyond that point, to face new circumstances, to rise to the more strenuous and momentous demand of its future will be the greatest and surest sign of the soundness of his labour. That test is being applied to the National Movement at the very moment of his departure.

The dealth of Lokamanya Tilak comes upon us at a time when the country is passing through most troubled and poignant hours. It occurs at a critical period, it coincides even with a crucial moment when questions are being put to the nation by the Master of Destiny, on the answer to which depends the whole spirit, virtue and meaning of its future. In each event that confronts us there is a divine significance, and the passing away at such a time of such a man, on whose thought and decision thousands hung, should make more profoundly felt by the people, by every man in the Nation, the great, the almost religious responsibility that lies upon him personally.

At this juncture it is not for me to prejudge the issue; each must meet it according to his light and conscience. This at least can be demanded of every man who would be worthy of India and of her great departed son that he shall put away from him in the decision of the things to be done in the future all weakness of will, all defect of courage, all unwillingness for sacrifice. Let each strive to see with that selfless impersonality, taught by one of our greatest scriptures, which can alone enable us to identify ourselves both with the Divine Will and with the Son of our Mother. Two things India demands, a farther

future, the freedom of soul, life and action needed for the work she has to do for mankind; and the understanding by her children of that work and of her own true spirit that the future India may be indeed India. The first seems still the main sense and need of the present moment, but the second is also involved in them—a yet greater issue. On the spirit of our decisions now and in the next few years depends the truth, vitality and greatness of our future national existence. It is the beginning of a great Self-Determination not only in the external but in the spiritual. These two thoughts should govern our action. Only so can the work done by Lokamanya Tilak find its true continuation and issue.



THE UNPUBLISHED WRITINGS OF ARJAVA (J. A. CHADWICK)

(WITH SRI AUROBINDO'S COMMENTS)

THE LONG LODE

Deep water glint and afterconning flowers,
A lode frithfaring past moon-daisied hay,
Herying larks whose waifs of song will ride
The surge of light that breaks in ravelled showers
(Ebb-foam of stippled sunset, stranded froth
From latening twilight's yestershimmer play).

Once more the stark scythed acres of noontide
Unharshen into Silence—aftermath
Of noon-hush ecstasies. Transfigured clay
Craves, past the gross, its birthright of the subtle.

The waterspace spills no terrestrial light,
But lily blooms (the oval-leaved, sun-golden,
Or round as a green chariot's wheels that hustle
On moon-surfed ways, white as their moon-dipt flower);
And inlooked there, forevisioned, the all day withholden
Brief glimpse of gold's eternity of sky
Or dark's lit moonway thresholding that Power...

But silver coursing and rebeaconed dark
Of day's late sun-flame authenticity 19
Are far off things. —The hither music-gaze
Is a low knoll of crickets, and every lark
Rises in song, a vindicated peak
Over the foothills' croodling thunderhaze. 23

And, in a world of sight, those honey-matching
Blake flowers of meadow vetchling, and limsy beak

Of the ratheborn pod, lapped with unrustling grass
Faintly handsel the water depth's unlatching
Of furthest gate for glebes of quietude.

Above weird trees of opalescent glass
Dream-silence wove a purfled web to pass
From adamant of stars to opal boughs
And forest paths where strange-lit herblings drowse
Under the benison of dew—rare food
Of wandering unicorns....Between two trees
What glimmered? Flashing hoof, silver and pearl, which pawed
An echoless jade pavement of still dream?
Here no corrupting veil may dim the peace,
The water-lily whiteness of those limbs—
Or nimble-running with tail and mane astream
Through hyaline air, moon-purified, or blent
With the new gold that sudden sunrise brims
Over the foundering dikewalls of half-dawn.

Lovely at the noon-hush, unicorn of light,
And silverly lovely lost decipherment
Of why new gulphs beneath Atlantic yawn,—
Atlantean eyes averted from sooth-sight,
A starless land's disloyalty to dreams.

Author's note: "The dialect intransitive verb *to croodle* in line 23 means 'to cower down, crouch, cling close to anything' (also 'to feel cold')."

Sri Aurobindo's Comment:

On the first version submitted: "The poem is a little difficult to evaluate. There is much expenditure of suggestive original images and equally suggestive expression—e.g. 'darksong floating to farlaired eventide On the undersong of crickets'—'dim aftermath of moon-hush ecstasies'—'day's late sun-flame authenticity' and many others and a number of lines that are remarkable, e.g.—

'An echoless jade-pavement of still dream'—
'Over the foundering dikewalls of half dawn'—
'Atlantean eyes averted from sooth-sight'—

'A starless land's disloyalty to dreams'—
'Brief glimpse of gold's eternity of sky
And night's moon-prints on threshold of that Power'.[1]

Lines like these ought to tell anywhere. The defect is somewhere in the building of the whole. I cannot at all agree that there is something too fluent and superficial about it; it is the latter part of your criticism of it that is nearer the truth.[2] There is a certain fusing of the materials (nowhere in the poem of an inferior kind) into a continuous inevitableness that is absent. The rhythm also—though there is no line that can be pronounced defective,—does not carry the sense of a victorious whole; there are many good effects, but the total effect is not quite conclusive. It is good poetry that ought by the value of its constituent materials to have been something more."

(23-5-1933)

On the next version: "It is certainly more *réussé* this time. The poem is more of an even and harmonious whole and the diction has shed most of the defect it had."

(Question: "What prevents in line 19 the threefold and closely adjacent assonances '*day's late* sun-*flame*' from being a defect—or is it a defect?")

"Because it seems to be deliberate and serves a purpose in enhancing the rhythmic significance, a feeling of prolongation in the same note by which the sound adds to the meaning something not expressed in words."

(Question: "You wrote of my last attempt to revise the weak places: 'the diction has shed most of the defect it had.' Could you underline any words or phrases where the diction is still at fault (even though the fault may not be removable from this particular poem)? e.g. 'afterconning', 'handsel', 'hyaline air'? ")

"These expressions or at least the first 2 are of course such as seem to call the attention—but it is only when there are too many such words and phrases that the diction as a whole can be said to be at fault. I meant the line in which these words occur and some others as they were, when I used the word 'most'. "

[1] About the new version "On dark's lit moonway thresholding that Power," Sri Aurobindo wrote: "It is even better then the other."

[2] "A rather too elaborate diction—words which, as it were, self-consciously draw the attention to themselves instead of directing it with economy and unobtrusive good breeding to the particular meaning and general enveloping atmosphere."

(Question: "Are there still transitions which are abrupt and obscure? There is certainly an evenness and a forming of a harmonious whole which is lacking. Is it due, not merely to technical defects in *construction*, but to the plan and *structure*—as a writer distinguishes these? 'La construction et la composition se rapportent à l'exécution, la structure à la conception'. ")

"Yes. The alterations you have made make a great difference for the better and the poem would be entirely successful except that still the total conception of the poem does not emerge—the absence of a foreseen unity of structure is there. The details are now admirable; there is a kind of construction but one that seems to labour towards oneness without plainly achieving it. You see the parts vividly—there is not yet a unifying gaze."

COMMUNITY

This single lens that turns awry
All that has entered through the eye;
This fever haste to clutch and store
Of empty shadows more and more.
To make the mirrored 'other' smart,
We aim—and stab—at our own heart.

Who heaped his poverty aloft
When, fed, at hunger cry he scoffed?
Who has fettered everywhere
The strength to build, the grace to share?
Who owns high hills we may not tread,
Burns the coffee, ploughs in the bread?

Leaven works in the dispossessed,
Tentative touchings from breast to breast:
So out of stroke upon unjust stroke
The ungrudging beauty of common folk
Shall look to Light's kingdom within and build
All things on earth that the high gods willed.

Sri Aurobindo's Comment:

(Question: "Though there are imperfections and crudities in other lines, is it not the unimpressiveness and obviousness of the final couplet that most completely wrecks the poem taken as a whole though its failure to cohere into a whole is another of its major blemishes, I take it?")

"I don't think it is the last couplet that is responsible, it is rather the want of cohesion. The first stanza is excellent and strikes a certain distinctive note; the second begins to wander away from it and ends on a quite different note; the third which has a certain power sounds yet tentative as if it were trying to get back the original inspiration and not succeeding—so that each stanza gives a quite different impression from the others."

(To be continued)

THE BALCONY DARSHAN

(A Letter)

OFTEN you have asked me to write to you about the most striking things of the Ashram here and so long I have somehow dodged the issue. You see, it isn't at all an easy job to pick and choose the striking things of the place. I am still, like a novice, seeing things more than understanding their deeper import. However, just to satisfy your curiosity, I am giving below some idea of what's known as the balcony darshan here. In my view it is the most marvellous part of the daily routine followed here and I have attended it almost every day of my stay (here). Yet who can conspire with words to arrest and confine the peculiar thrills of the union of the human souls with Divine? It is no ordinary darshan we see before us. There is no proclamation, no ceremony, no obsequious bowing or supercilious admittance. Here is no hurry, no bustle, no pushing nor jostling. Here there is no newspapery trumpeting of numbers, nor pompous festoonings and loud greetings.

Here is the quiet rhythmic beauty of a simple gathering of human souls below and the smiling peace and power of the graciously humanised Divinity.

Just mark, what a fine pattern of meeting quietly unfolds itself!

The drowsy mists of the night are fled and Dawn is slowly breaking, developing into day. The birds are astir with the eager songs for the coming glory. Our human hearts are aflutter with the desire to see the Mother. It is time for Her to appear at the Balcony—should I add, the infallible balcony of our sincere aspiration? From the east, from the west, from north and south, aspirants of all ages and climes, workers, scholars, poets and sportsmen are moving to the one gravitational point of the balcony of grace. They are like muted waves driven to the shore by a simple, sweeping breath of some invisible power. Nothing, it seems, can resist this centripetal movement. Whether one comes alone or in twos and threes, the driving force is one undivided Presence. Within a few minutes, the whole scene of multitudinous gathering gets set before us. Small children have selected a little spot of their own. Free and frolicking as they are, they must have their little chat and fun even here and at this hour. The Mother keeps them in her breast for ever and need they suspend their little talk and play for the sake of what we call conscious aspiration? And yet here even these child-souls never for a moment forget

the purpose for which they have come, the glimpse of the loving mother they will have. But some of the grown-ups among them are already quietly standing or sitting apart, trying to awaken the proper spirit of welcome in their bosom and thought. Some of the adults quietly talk shop for a while they almost automatically adjust themselves to the divine hour. But most are wholly engaged in silently sending prayers from the places they have chosen themselves. Each has his or her own favourite spot and as soon as they are on it, their inner being, it seems, gets in touch with the Divine Mother as though some unerring Finger has tuned them at once to a spell-binding mood of celestial waiting.

Except for the little children's audible prattlings, the whole assembly is now gathered to such a silent upsurge of meditative quietness, there is now created such a superhuman atmosphere of calm expectation that the scene appears to be ideally set for the purifying advent of the golden Dawn.

While this silent drama of human aspiration is being staged below, O with what an incredible quietness but no less unhurrying quickness the gracious body of the supreme Mother now appears like some fairy queen at the balcony above! Not only all eyes but all hearts and souls are instantaneously turned towards the heavenly face with bated breath. What a perfect puissant peace now growingly spreads over the purified place! As though some magic Will said "Let there be peace" and so there was the clear birth of peace all round. Even the children are hushed into silence.

While all eyes and thoughts are centred on the unfolding glory above, the divine eyes quietly survey the upturned beings below. What inimitable phases of the beauteous smile, what outflowings, emanations of the superhuman compassion, what a personal touch of security and succour to each! There is an expansion of the soul-movements opened from below, there is a swift spontaneous widening of the human consciousness all round. Even the children are affected. All corporeal movements are suspended. All have ceased to live in their body. There is a strange silent transformation indeed! If one has the inward sight to see, one knows that bodies of inert clay have momentarily turned into undying flame of conscious beings. Time itself seems to stand still. Eternity has been squeezed into a few minutes. The human soul is face to face with the Divine Reality. The very atmosphere takes on the radiance of the divine beauty. The breezes play a celestial music. The soul blossoms with a rapturous fragrance. Wearing a smiling gravity all through, the multiform, multi-dimensional aspects and powers of truth converge upon a single leaning, down-looking expression of the Mother. The earth is gathered up into the heavenly vision. Truth alone rules and triumphs.

But who can describe these wonderful few moments of the soulful union?

After a few searching glance-movements all around, the sad-glad signal,

as it were, of her withdrawal is given. The mute lips break into a breath-taking smile. Aeons of the heavenly grace and compassion come out of their mysterious hiding into the open dawn-light facial expression. The beautiful flower of Bliss has finally bloomed and slowly, quietly, lingeringly retires into the silent creative spaces. The Darshan is over but the mute union continues to course through, grow upon and envelop the entire being.

To some it is a daily spiritual bath, to others an expanding growth and glory. To some it is the opening of fresh mystic vision, to others an immersion into the deeper silences of uplifting wisdom. To some it is the birth of a new outlook on life, to others a fresh impetus to waning energy of action. For some it is the certain dispeller of all befogging depression and gloom, to others a harbinger of indescribable dreams and intimations of immortality. But for none is here any dry monotony of a mechanical routine or savourless pointless idle ceremony.

So there you are. But until you have had a taste of the ineffable experience yourself, you can hardly know and understand the peculiar beauty of the balcony darshan. How I wish you were here at least once to drink from this fountain of divine beauty and peace and delight!

SHREEKRISHNA PRASAD

BOOKS IN THE BALANCE

Stories and Plays for Children by Sunanda. Publishers: Sri Aurobindo Ashram. Pages: 101. Price: Rs. 2/-

In view of the apparent poverty of juvenile literature of true lasting worth in our country at the present time, it is really a pleasure to go through Sunanda's *Stories and Plays for Children.* The book satisfies the soul more than the senses and one feels as if one's vital aesthetic sense were subtilised. Considered from this point of view, it is a new experiment in juvenile literature. Hitherto children have been given stories which have mere entertainment value plus some clear-cut moral lesson. And the technique adopted is that of arousing the sense of curiosity for strange incredible adventures, imaginary fairies, giants and imps, talking witty animals and birds etc., etc. If a writer can provide plenty of such thrills and impart some lucid lesson of virtue and vice, evil and good, high and low in an easy intelligible language through interesting dialogues and simple familiar situations though outwardly full of incredibilities, he is considered to have done his job well. But the aim of Sunanda's stories and plays is different though the technique adopted may be more or less the same.

Here, too, we meet with the fairies of our dreams. We come across a magical laughing mirror and extraordinary flowers and fishes. But the purpose for which these familiar and conventionally accepted devices are used is not to satisfy the rudimentary physical-mental curiosity of children or please their budding sensibility for what the adults call the strange and the untrue. These stories are not the product of mere literary imagination or romantic sensibility, nor are they designed only to create in the reader "a willing suspension of disbelief" for the time being. Their chief purpose is to touch the inner spirit, the finer essence of human nature, whether juvenile or adult, inasmuch as they themselves are born out of the inner spiritual perceptions of the writer.

But the experience is not exclusively personal. Indeed, there is hardly any true spiritual perception which has a mere personal origin, value or appeal. No wonder the moment one comes across it, one immediately recognizes it provided one's spirit is awake. There is no doubt whatsoever that the spirit of the author of these stories and plays is intensely awake. Had it not been so, it could not have created stories like *Rupak, Vasu the Flute Boy, The Garden*

or a play like *Light*. Even a casual reader can see that there is more than a mere literary ability or romantic imagination at work here. Indeed, all the stories and plays of this book are born out of a new power, a new sensitiveness, a new awareness or consciousness, to be more accurate. And it is really to her credit that Sunanda can use this new consciousness and power with so much ease and charm that anybody who reads her tends himself to change in sensibility. There is no question of a willing suspension of disbelief, for a new faith, a new certitude, one may almost say, a new and purer force seizes hold of the reader and it seems as if it was not the magical pen of the writer alone but some irresistible beauty and sweetness that is carrying him along. And the inevitable result of this new style or technique is that when you come to the end of a story or play, it is not the moral significance of it or the aesthetic beauty of it which affects our appreciative sense but an enlightening feeling, a touch of inner discrimination.

Indeed, one feels like saying that stories of this kind not only bring out the eternal child existing within each one of us but make that undying childhood higher in quality. It is not for nothing that Wordsworth reminded us long ago that heaven lies about us in our infancy. These stories have a sort of heavenly atmosphere. One need not ask here: What is the moral lesson which a story like *Rupak* or the *Garden* or *Vasu the Flute Boy* teaches us? One is not even aware of any moral issue involved here. The truth is that these stories take us to a much higher or deeper region than the moral or merely aesthetic. And it is by means of such stories and fables that the deeper and more enduring disciplining and culturing of the juvenile mind can be done. This is a truth which our educationists and teachers have yet to learn. What a rapid progress our pupils will make if such books are prescribed in their course of study at a tender age! It is really absurd to think that children are unfit to take in the spiritual beauty and substance of these stories.

But even for sheer poetic beauty, Sunanda's simple easy style is commendable. Consider, for example, the following two passages:

"Nature clad in her new sari looked extra cheerful and happily anxious as if she was waiting to welcome a long-looked-for Guest. Everything was ready, a deep fathomless peace pervaded everywhere. The leaves of the forest trees danced silently in the wind. Even the birds stopped their twittering. They forgot to think about their half-built nests, forgot to get the food for their young ones, and forgot their still unhatched eggs.

"A very young child came to this forest. In each step of his there was a new joy. He came to a river bank. He was caught by the silence and peace in which Nature around him was steeped. He too stood there as though

waiting for something. Slowly the music started, seeming to arise from the pure river...

"As the days passed, the boy's figure and face was moulded into a kind of beauty which caught everyone's attention. The little boy developed very firm yet refined features. His tender-lidded, deep grey eyes seemed gentle, yet a shade of graveness was already there. His full-moon-like cheeks and pink sensitive bud-like lips made his face angelic. The slight gesture of his handsome limbs, when he lay awake in the cot, gave the onlooker a feeling of a cluster of white wind-flowers."

Nearly each story has passages of poetic beauty and freshness. Beauty and delight of the senses risng to be transmuted into beauty and delight of the soul—this seems the achievement again and again in this moderately priced collection of sensitive and moving stories.

SHREEKRISHNA PRASAD.

IS OUR CHRONOLOGY FOR ANCIENT INDIA CORRECT ?

Some Criticisms and Suggestions

I

THE outlook of modern scholarship on ancient Indian chronology took shape with the hypothesis started by Sir William Jones in 1793—the identification of Chandragupta Maurya with Sandrocottus or Sandrocyptus, the Indian king figuring as a contemporary of Alexander the Great and of his immediate successors in the accounts left by the Greeks who wrote about Alexander's invasion of north-western India and about the period following it. The date—somewhere between 326 and 316 B.C. in the opinion of most Orientalists—at which Sandrocottus must have begun his reign from the capital which the Greek annalists called Palibothra came to be considered central to Indian chronology: calculations backward and forward were to be made from that date which was held to mark the commencement of Maurya rule in India, with Pataliputra as its capital.

Not that all Orientalists have subscribed to Sir William's hypothesis. Among Western scholars, as far back as 1858 M. Troyer, basing himself on the mediaeval historian Kalhana's book on Kashmiri kings, *Rajatarangini*, disputed it and communicated his view to Max Muller. But Max Muller brushed aside his arguments and most historians from Europe have agreed with the Oxford professor. Among Indian scholars too the hypothesis has won wide acceptance. But a few dissident voices have been raised[1] and, though mostly ignored, they have persisted and others in the future are likely to take up their cause, for this cause, apart from whatever intrinsic merit it may have, fits in with the traditional impression of the Indian race about the far antiquity of its own past. This impression reaches some sort of focus with the help of those parts of the Hindu Puranas which in former ages did duty for history and contain detailed genealogical tables of successive kings as well as an enumeration of some attendant circumstances. The Puranas stand

[1] Kuppayya, T. S. Narayana Sastri, M. K. Acharya, A. Somayajulu, T. Subba Row, M. Krishnamachariar, R. Subba Rao and, the most indefatigable of all, Pandit Kota Venkatachalam are the main dissidents, with small differences among themselves.

four-square against Sir William's identification and Max Muller's *imprimatur* to it, as well as against all subsequent support claimed for it from inscriptions and coins and documents of periods after the first Maurya's: the Puranic chronology puts Chandragupta Maurya centuries before the time of Alexander.

Sir William himself knew this very well. The Hindu astronomers agreed, he informs us, that "the 1st January 1790 was in the year 4891 of the Kaliyuga"[1] and his "Pandit Radhcant" taught him 3102 B.C. as the Kaliyuga's starting-point for the Puranas, so that the first year of the Kaliyuga would be 3101 B.C. Studying the Bhagwata Purana, he arrived at 1502 B.C. as the traditional date of Chandragupta's accession—quite a far cry from anything between 326 and 316 B.C. The real Puranic date is even earlier: 1534 B.C. For there was a double misreading, on Sir William's part, of the Bhagwata. First, he substituted for the period between Chandragupta Maurya and the opening of the Kaliyuga the period between him and the Mahabharata War which is dated by the Puranas as several years before the Kaliyuga. Secondly, the latter period which in the Puranas is 1604 years because the Puranas put the Mahabharata War in 3138 B.C. is taken by Sir William to be 1600 years. According to the Indian scholars[2] who look askance at his "Greek synchronism", there is a majority vote in the Puranas on the reign-periods of the four dynasties preceding the one which Chandragupta Maurya founded:

Barhadratha dynasty of 22 kings after the Mahabharata War—	1006 years,
Pradyota dynasty of 5 kings—	138 years,
Sisunaga dynasty of 10 kings—	360 years,
Nanda dynasty of 9 kings but 2 reigns, the last 8 kings brothers ruling jointly—	100 years.

F.E. Pargiter, with the materials available to him when he published his *Purana Text of the Dynasties of the Kali Age*, mentions the above readings for the Nandas, Sisunagas and Pradyotas as occurring in several Puranas but finds ambiguity about the Barhadrathas and he is loth to accept even a total of 1000 years which is in his copies for 32 kings (10 before the War and 22 after).[3] But he grants that some Puranas do give 1500 years in round numbers as the interval between the War and the first Nanda's coronation.[4] As the Nandas reigned for 100 years, there could not be approximately 1600 years altogether between the War and Chandragupta Maurya if 22 Barhadrathas, rather than 32, did

[1] *The Works of Sir William Jones*, Vol. IV, p. 52. (Edition 1807).
[2] E.g. Narayana Sastri in *The Kings of Magadha*.
[3] Pp. 13, 18, 20, 24.
[4] P. 58, Note 21.

not reign for roughly 1000 years. We may take it then that even Pargiter's studies do not disallow the above table.

What should we say about the worth of this chronology? The Barhadratha dynasty with its 22 kings has for its average reign-period a little over 45 years. A high average, but we cannot lay down an *a priori* demand that kings reported to have reigned between 4000-5000 years ago should conform to conditions prevalent much later. And it may be noted that the Puranas assign to the next two dynasties the lower average of 27 and 36 years respectively. The Nandas again with their 100 years have a high average, for, although there are nine of them, they belong only to two generations. But it is not improbable since even a longer average can be cited from the history of Orissa as shown by inscriptions which establish that Choraganga reigned from year 998 to year 1069 of what is called the Saka Era and that he was. succeeded by four sons who reigned till Saka 1111.[1] These figures give 113 years for five reigns and two generations. Coming to the Maurya and subsequent dynasties the Puranas do not hesitate to give certain kings short reigns of 7 years and 3 and 1 and even of 6 months. There is no fixed bias towards longevity and the chroniclers seem merely to put down what they have learned.

Even if we regard some of the long reign-periods as mistakes, the total of 1634 years for 46 kings before Chandragupta Maurya cannot strike us as excessive: the average is slightly less than 35 years for a king. The number is especially reasonable for an ancient country whose people had a reputation for unusual length of life. J. W. McCrindle, in his compilation on ancient India from the Greek historians of a few centuries after Alexander, has several passages on this reputation. And Vincent Smith has summed up on its more conservative side their testimony in his *Early History of India*: "The inhabitants were believed to attain the age of a hundred and thirty years."[2]

So strong is the general sense of history conveyed by the genealogical and chronological parts of the Puranas that in spite of obvious corruptions in the text of some copies no serious scholar has been able to avoid it, at least in regard to the ages following the Mahabharata War. One of the ablest scholars, Dr. H. H. Wilson, observes: "After the date of the Great War, the Vishnu Purana, in common with other Puranas which contain similar lists, specifies kings and dynasties with greater precision and offers political and chronological particulars to which, on the score of probability, there is nothing to object.

1 M. M. Chakravarti, "Chronology of the Eastern Ganga Kings of Orissa" (*Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, Part I, Vol. LXXII, 1903).

2 P. 100.

In truth, their general accuracy has been incontrovertibly established. Inscriptions on columns of stone, on rocks, on coins, deciphered only of late years ...have verified the names of races and titles of princes—the Gupta and the Andhra Rajas mentioned in the Puranas."[1]

Pargiter who first collected the Puranic lists in a systematic form for Western scholars expresses his conviction: "These old genealogies, with their incidental stories, are not to be looked upon as legends or fables devoid of basis or substance, but contain genuine historical tradition, and may well be considered and dealt with from a common-sense point of view."[2]

Dr. H.C. Raychaudhuri who has freely criticised the Puranas on occasion has still this to aver: "The epigraphic or numismatic records of the Satavahanas, Abhiras, Vakatakas, Nagas, Guptas and many other Dynasties bear out the observation of Dr. V. Smith that 'modern European writers have been inclined to disparage unduly the authority of the Puranic lists but closer study finds in them much genuine and valuable historical tradition'."[3]

Finally, we have Dr. A. D. Pusalker: "The present view is to accept the Puranas as one of the important sources of the traditional history of ancient India. Nowadays the Puranas are being critically studied in order to extract historical data therefrom, and modern historians have used the Puranic material in their works."[4]

Yes, the Puranas are felt more and more to be historical source-books—and yet by a curious paradox the bulk of current thought turns away from the date they offer of Chandragupta Maurya, just because the identification of Sandrocottus with him is considered, in the words of Max Muller, "such as to admit of no reasonable doubt."

But we may mention that current thought is here not only against the Puranas: it is also against all other strictly Indian evidence as set forth by the very historians who discredit the Puranic date. They have claimed that the date of the Mahabharata War which the Puranic tradition puts 36 years before the Kaliyuga and from which the usual computations are done is not accepted by a majority of old Indian chronologists: only the school of Aryabhatta is said to uphold it, whereas the school of Vriddha-Garga and Varahamihira is said to transfer it to 2449 B.C. and the Aihole inscription of

[1] Introduction to Vishnu Purana, p. 56

[2] "Ancient Indian Genealogies and Chronology" (*Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, 1910*).

[3] *The Political History of India*, p. 56.

[4] *The Indian Inheritance*, Part I, p. 110 (Bhavan Book University).

Pulakesin II is said to synchronise it with that of the Kaliyuga.[1] We think this division can be proved to be an error. But whether is stands or falls and whether or not we accept 1534 B.C. as the date of Chandragupta Maurya, we are unable on any computation from Indian evidence to arrive at some year between 326 and 316 B.C. for him.

To reject so unanimous a rejection—and particularly since the rejection is connected with the Puranas—we must have a truly substantial case. India's own historical traditions demand a more critical scrutiny of Sir William's hypothesis than it has received and a thorough examination of whatever alternative theory may be possible on their basis.

(*To be continued*)

K. D. SETHNA

1 *The History and Culture of the Indian People*, Vol. I, *The Vedic Age*, pp. 268-69 (Bharati Vidya Bhavan).

Students' Section

YOGIC HINTS

The separation and liberation of the consciousness from the body sense is indispensable in the Yoga (3-10-1934)

* *

In the self or pure existence there is no time or space—except spiritual space or wideness. (7-10-1934)

* *

The psychic can have peace behind it—but the inner mind, vital and physical are not necessarily silent — they are full of movements. It is the higher consciousness that has a basis of peace. (1-2-1934)

* *

Every one carries around him an environmental consciousness or atmosphere through which he is in relation with others—or with the universal forces. It is through this that there [enter] forces or the thoughts or feelings of others. (17-10-1934)

It can become silent when there is the wideness. One can become conscious of it and deal with what passes through it. A man without it would be without contact with the rest of the world. (18-10-1934)

Sri Aurobindo

POEMS

EARTH'S LIBERATION

A calm and moonlit night had towered—
The vast and wearied world below....
Downward the light-veiled stars now peered
To watch the descending Glow.

Long before midnight we sank in swoon—
But a single lone soul upward leapt
And saw a large Sun in place of moon!
Silent it stood in ecstasy wrapt.

The majestic Globe came gliding deep,
Raining gold on the milky way.
Slowly quivered the earth's aeon-sleep,
Its inconscient bondage fell away.

All now was one—the azure, the grey—
To welcome the approaching Guest;
No hymns sung and no siren's blare today,
Only a hushed immensity east and west!

NAGIN DOSHI

THE UNWRITTEN POEM

THIS is the greatest poem of my life...
Unwritten on paper or parchment
Its rhythm wanders through eternity
Unbound by words
It floats beyond the oceans, beyond the skies.
It is free, free to grow in this life and beyond,
To roam music-winged among the spheres,
To shiver in every heart,
Touching lightly the strings of sorrows and joys.
I have not given it shape:
It takes the manifold forms
Of love, devotion and flaming sacrifice...
It breathes delight in every soul;
It sings with choirs of seraphim
And dances on chimeras' and dragons' wings.
It goes eternally in music and rhythm,
My unwritten poem—
It is the winged seed of silence.

RANAJIT

THE FOUR AGES OF INDIA'S CULTURAL CYCLE

SRI AUROBINDO AND THE MOTHER: THE HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THEIR LIVES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

"THE Mother comes in order to bring down the Supramental and it is the descent which makes her full manifestation here possible." (*Sri Aurobindo on Himself* p. 433). This is the answer that Sri Aurobindo gave to a question put by a sadhak in 1935, and it is true both from the physical point of view and the metaphysical; from the physical point of view, because by her coming to Pondicherry from France and by her collaboration with Sri Aurobindo the descent became possible; from the metaphysical, because it was she who, holding the Transcendental Power in her, mediated successfully between the call of the earth-consciousness from below and the sanction of the Supreme through Sri Aurobindo—from above—to bring down the Supermind. We have said that this Supramental manifestation has been made possible not by any human effort but only by the Divine himself taking human birth in the forms of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. But then the question arises why there should be two Avatars to achieve this. The answer can be given in terms of Sri Aurobindo's spiritual philosophy or even in terms of Hindu spiritual philosophy. Indian Vedantic tradition may not speak of the Divine Mother and may speak only of the Purushottama because it wants to draw back from world-nature and arrive at the supreme realisation beyond it; the Indian Tantric tradition may speak only of the Adya Shakti, the Transcendent Mother, because it wants to possess and dominate the world-nature and arrive at the supreme realisation through it. But the Hindu spirituality which would reconcile the two traditions can and does admit that Ishwara as the Lord of the cosmos comes out of the Mother who then takes Her place beside him as the cosmic Shakti. According to Sri Aurobindo's philosophy, the Transcendent Mother is "the Supreme Consciousness and Power above the universe and it is by her that all the gods are manifested, and even the Supramental Ishwara comes into manifestation through her—the Supramental Purushottama of whom the Gods are Powers and Personalities." (*Sri Aurobindo on Himself*, page 446.) As such all the cosmic drama that was enacted by the Supreme in the unfoldment of the higher worlds and the gods, had to be enacted on earth to bring down

the Supermind to the earth-consciousness by two Supramental incarnations in the forms of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.

Apart from the metaphysical theory of this spiritual fact, do not the findings of Physical Science also say that even for the creation of the material universe the Inconscient Existence came into manifestation only when the Inconscient Energy which was inherently contained in it made possible, by a play of the various forms of that Energy, the creation of a material universe? Only, the scientist does not know that there is a Will veiled in that Inconscient Energy. So too from a Superconscient Existence, for all this manifestation of cosmos on different planes to come into action, a Superconscient Consciousness-Force inherent in it must play its part by laws of manifestation appropriate to each plane; and the supramental manifestation is only one of the several kinds of manifestations but worked out on one and the same general principle as on other planes, by a Power of Being and a Power of Becoming. When the Supramental manifestation has to take place on earth, it is but reasonable that the same drama will have to be enacted even on the earth plane; and it is being enacted by both Sri Aurobindo and the Mother till its time of completion, when finally both of them will appear in Supramental bodies. To say in one breath that the consciousness of the Mother and that of Sri Aurobindo are one and the same, and then again that they are two separate Avatars, though it be of one consciousness in two forms for the purposes of supramental creation, may be satisfactory to the mind of Reason but not to the mind of the Senses. The only way for the mind of the Senses to be satisfied is by spiritual experience of this truth which is as much a fact and reality as any other experience.

The details of the Mother's activities of her childhood days and of her youth are not available to us as those of Sri Aurobindo. That she wrote some books before the year 1912 is evident from "Tales of all Times", "Words of Long Ago" and "Supreme Discovery" and one can see how they breathe a dynamic power of spirituality. Then her "Prayers and Meditations" give us data of her inner life as to her Sadhana for the earth-consciousness, and they are mostly from the year 1912 to 1920; till she finally came to Pondicherry. But from the beginning, since her spiritual aim and goal and Sri Aurobindo's were the same and the heights of spiritual dynamic planes they attained so similar, the work of each seems complementary to the other's. Her work for the spiritual progress of individuals was going on, perhaps from the year 1912 or even earlier. With regard to the method of spiritual help to others, Sri Aurobindo says in one of his talks how he himself found it during his early days in Pondicherry with her aid:

"When I came to Pondicherry, I got from within a programme for my

Sadhana. I carried it out for myself, but could not make much progress regarding the help to be given to others; then came Mira—I found with her aid the method for this help." (*Mother India*, March, 1953: from notes taken by Anilbaran Roy.

When the Ashram was started in 1926 and Sri Aurobindo went into solitude for more active inner work, the Mother undertook the management of the Ashram. No better description of the part played by the Mother in the Divine work for the progress of the individual man or the collective human race can be given than the one we find in *The Mother* written by Sri Auorobindo and published in 1928. The Truths of the Soul, even of the highest Transcendental state, that Sri Aurobindo in his solitude activised in his Sadhana, the Mother kept pace with and methodised their full power for the purposes of man and the earth. All the Gods and the Powers that Sri Aurobindo held within him, even by the year 1926, were equally at the disposal of the Mother for the work and she methodised that work. The above facts become clearly revealed from the two following quotations, one of them a prayer of 25th September, 1914, and the other a message of 29th March, 1956.

"September 25, 1914.

O divine and adorable Mother, with Thy help what is there that is impossible? The hour of realisation is near and Thou hast assured us of Thy aid that we may perform integrally the supreme Will.

Thou hast accepted us as fit intermediaries between the unthinkable realities and the relativities of the physical world, and Thy constant presence in our midst is a token of Thy active collaboration.

The Lord has willed and Thou dost execute;
A new light shall break upon the earth,
A new world shall be born,
And the things that were announced shall be fulfilled."

The Message of 29 February-29 March runs as follows:

"Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute.
A new light breaks upon the earth,
A new world is born,
The things that were promised are fulfilled.

THE MOTHER.

Thus the three happenings, firstly of December 5th to 9th of 1950, secondly of February 29th to March 29th of 1956 and thirdly of April 24th of 1956,

which have been willed by Sri Aurobindo and executed by the Mother, may be considered the three greatest out of the historical events which mark the advent of a new cycle and growth of supramental culture. All these three events have been described in the course of these two articles. So now we can say that the four ages of India's cultural cycle which began with the figure of the Intuitive godhead in man ended on 5th December 1950, when a new cycle began with the figure of the Supramental godhead in man. All the spiritual gains which Sri Aurobindo and the Mother achieved during the forty years before the end of 1950 have to be rapidly recovered now and a fine flowering of these gains will mark the day when the Supramental manifestation begins visibly even for the most blind.

But then what is the nature of the supramental culture that has begun in this new cycle? Firstly, with the realisation of the "Mind of Light" in the earth-consciousness in December 1950, a "larger element in the principle of evolution through knowledge has entered into the forces of the material universe"; secondly, Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, instead of standing on the level of the overmental consciousness and acting upon the cosmic and individual forces, act on them since that day, from the supramental consciousness. The fact of their acting thus may be visible or felt or reflected in the consciousness of only those who have reached a stage in their yoga in which their surface consciousness itself is able to feel the touch of the Supermind. But others can realise too the results of this descent into the earth-consciousness though not feeling it directly. Besides, it need not be that Supermind acts only impersonally on the world forces and does not act directly on individuals. Both Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, standing on the level of the supramental consciousness, act on all those individuals whose inner being is consciously open to them, and in accordance with the level of their consciousness; these can feel their influence both in their inner and outer lives. Thus a new cycle of supramental culture which constitutes the fulfilment of the five ideals of Sri Aurobindo's childhood days and the highest aspiration of the Mother's childhood days, has begun. Just as a history of the cycle of human civilisation with the intuitive figure of godhead in man is to be written now, so also a history of the cycle of human civilisation with the supramental figure of godhead may have to be written, and such a history should begin from December 1950. But the history of this new cycle is only a progressive development of the previous cycle which we have taken to have begun from the time of the Rig Vedic Rishis; and then also it is a progressive development of the lives and achievements of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother during the last 40 years of the previous cycle. Let us hope somebody will soon begin to write a history of this new cycle of human civilisation and of a new spiritual culture.

That the lives and achievements of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother have a special significance for India and Indians is quite evident from the fourth ideal of Sri Aurobindo. India has attained freedom and it is India now that must play its full role in the spiritualisation of the human race; true it is that it is already playing a creditable role though it is only ten years that she is free. Science and its discoveries have created and are creating all material facilities for the unification of mankind. For this unification, the inner heart and mind of the race has not yet been completely ready, and it is in this respect that India is playing her part successfully. Still the "gift by India of her spiritual knowledge and means for the spiritualisation of life to the whole race" has not been manifesting visibly in its full power and truth. Invisibly the message of the Gita, the Upanishads and *The Life Divine* has been spreading all over the world through literature and the arts. Even the methods of psychic and spiritual practice are being followed now all over the earth and the eyes of other peoples are increasingly turned towards India. In the past cycle, except in the Vedic age, spirituality in its application to the collective life either of a nation or of a still smaller group of human society, though attempted by some religions like Hinduism, Buddhism and Christianity, has never succeeded. The attempt and success of any these, or of some other religions to unite mankind or groups of human societies ethically should not be construed as an attempt at spiritualisation of the collective life. Spirituality knows no restriction on the freedom of individual thought and practice, so long as the freedom each individual wants is genuinely given by him to every other individual and is not used to dominate others by force. In the present cycle material conditions are fast developing for creating facilities for every individual to live spiritually in the collective life of man, not only a particular nation but also the whole human race. A new spiritual religion of humanity is arising and it will sweep all obstacles before it and achieve its success. All those things are due to the action of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother on the world forces.

Sri Aurobindo wrote some forty years ago: "The changes we see in the world today are intellectual, moral, physical in their ideal and intention: the spiritual revolution waits for its hour and throws up meanwhile its waves here and there. Until it comes the sense of others cannot be understood and till then all interpretations of present happening and forecast of man's future are vain things. For its nature, power, event are that which will determine the next cycle of our humanity." (*Thoughts and Glimpses.* page 41.)

The spiritual revolution has come and the new cycle of our humanity has begun. Even an intellectual appreciation of the part played by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother in this spiritual revolution will convince one about the truth of all that they have written. Till the end of the last cycle, man could not choose

his own ideal, great or small, for his fulfilment in life and yet adopt spiritual means to achieve it; for, as soon as he attempted it, he had either to give up the spiritual life to achieve his worldly ideal, or else to give up his worldly ideal in order to achieve the spiritual motive behind it. But now, Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, by the manifestation of the New Light, have enabled man to achieve his worldly ideal consistently with his spiritual motive, by creating proper life-conditions, both inner and outer. This is the thing that has been helping the spiritual revolution to establish itself without people going about and crying aloud, and it is to this end that the three great historical events mentioned above in the course of these articles have led. But every minute of their life lived in Pondicherry was a great historical attempt in itself for the consummation of this, and they have finally succeeded in making a beginning of the last ideal which is the seal of a definite and permanent success to their one aim, the spiritualisation of humanity.

Now all these articles that have been written up to now under the caption "History of the Four Ages of India's Cultural Cycle" serve only as an introduction to the actual history that has to be attempted hereafter. These introductory articles give us an idea how humanity guided by the synthetic evolutionary Creative Consciousness of the Supreme through its spiritual instruments, Rishis and Vibhutis and by its own descents as Avatars, has passed and will pass through cycles of civilisation indicating a higher and higher progression of figures of godhead in man from cycle to cycle. As a result of these articles we have come to a definite conclusion about the ending of the past cycle and the beginning of the new cycle. Just as we began the introduction with the idea of rewriting a history of the past cycle of human civilisation, we end the introduction with the idea of the possibility of somebody writing a history of the new cycle of human civilisation, and having written this introduction, a plan may now be evolved of the history of the past cycle. There are some similarities in the mode of the beginnings of the past cycle and the present cycle and all that has been written up to now is necessary to understand these similarities.

We have seen that the past human cycle began with the Rishis of the Rig Vedic age. Sri Aurobindo says that what the Rig Vedic Rishis achieved at the beginning of the past cycle was a rapid flowering of the essential gains of the previous cycle. The facts and history of the cycle previous to the Rig Veda is again a subject in itself and it seems there is some data for such a history in the Rig Veda itself and also in the Brahmanas. But then what are the Vedas and what sort of men were the Rishis? The Vedas, especially the Rig Veda, are the oldest sacred scriptures which are in a form that is complete, and are available to humanity; the foundations they laid for the spiritual life of man have lasted through a whole cycle of his life on earth. "In the fixed tradition of

thousands of years they have been revered as the origin and standard of all that can be held as authoritative and true in Brahmana and Upanishad, in Tantra and Purana, in the doctrines of great philosophical schools and in the teachings of famous saints and sages." (*On the Veda:* page 5.) In spite of it, its spiritual meaning was not understood till Swami Dayananda, and later Sri Aurobindo brought it out. There are several other theories of the Vedas, but the two popular views of it are the ritualistic theory of Sayana and the naturalistic theory of Western scholars; almost all books available in the field for readers contain only these two interpretations. It also seems that the modern intellectuals and the advanced religionists of Hinduism hold these two views to be complementary to each other. As for instance, the Veda Vimarsa Vidvan Mandali of Mysore,—the patron of which is the Maharajah of Mysore and whose chief literary worker is the Asthana Maha Vidvan, translator of the Rig Veda in 29 volumes into the Canarese language,—has interpreted it according to the ritualistic theory of Sayana; and the English translation of the Mantra which it contains is merely a copying of Wilson's translation which is according to the naturalistic theory of the Westerners. It seems from a reading of it that the Maha Vidvan either believed those interpretations or had not the courage to interpret it independently of Sayana and Wilson. If the Veda was primarily intended for spiritual enlightenment and self-culture, and if it is on that basis that Indian culture and life developed, then these translations of the Rig Veda based on ritualistic and naturalistic interpretations will be not of much value. Of course Sayana has admitted the historical element in it and the Westerners in their translations have developed it still further. But both the theories together prove the Vedic Aryans to be an extraordinarily religious people worshipping Nature-Powers as gods, while the ritualistic theory goes a step further and says that they gained their earthly desires and after death happy states in other worlds from the gods who had some supernatural powers. So it is not known how far the historical element in them is reliable. For when the basic idea of the Veda that it is a scripture of spiritual self-culture is missed in the historical element, the truth of the spiritual motive and the turn it gives to the development of the whole life in it is lost. To give a ritualistic meaning to the Veda, Sayana has gone out of the way and has given meanings to words which the language of the Veda does not at all suggest; in spite of this his translations have been completely "empty of thought". In the same sentence from clause to clause, in the same verse from sentence to sentence, and in the same Sukta which is one unit of thought, from verse to verse, there is no continuity of thought. The Rishi is made to jump from idea to idea unconnected with each other and with no understanding of what he has written in the same clause, or sentence or verse.

Similarly is the naturalistic meaning of the Westerners which is closely based on the ritualistic meaning of Sayana. But Sri Aurobindo who has given a psychological and spiritualistic meaning to the Veda has made an interpretative translation of the Veda and the meaning from clause to clause, sentence to sentence, verse to verse and even Sukta to Sukta has acquired a continuity of thought; this is so because the Rishi meant to give a spiritual and psychological significance and purpose to the Veda.

Again, the Rig Veda is written in the form of poetical literature, it is in the form of Mantra. By Mantra we mean generally "a magical formula" into which certain types of energies are infused and mechanised and on account of which, by a certain ceremonial method of using the formula, they yield certain physical results. It is a Science as scientific as any physical science and the ancient Mystics of Greece, Chaldea, Egypt, Persia, India and other countries and the Hebrews knew it very well. History says that Moses delivered his people from Egypt by means of such powers; we have read that Atlantis sank into the sea on account of the misuse of such powers. But it is not merely world energies that can be mechanised into these formulas of Mantras; even spiritual energies can be similarly treated and that is what the Rishis did to their Suktas. Every Sukta in the Rig Veda contains several Mantras in the form of verses and each Sukta is composed by a Rishi and addressed to one god or more gods. It is this fact of praise to the gods through the Mantras and the special state of inner consciousness to which the Rishi had raised himself, that enabled him to pour into the Mantras spiritual energy. It can be said in Sri Aurobindo's terms that "the hymn was to the Rishi who composed it a means of spiritual progress for himself and for others. It rose out of his soul, it became a power of his mind, it was the vehicle of his self-expression in some important or even critical moment of his life's inner history. It helped him to express the god in him, to destroy the devourer, the expresser of evil; it became a weapon in the hands of the Aryan striver after perfection, it flashed forth like Indra's lightning against the Coverer on the slopes, the Wolf on the path, the Robber by the streams." (*On the Veda:* page 13.)

Such was the Mantra which the Rishi composed; the sacrificial system which the Rishi built about it was the ceremonial way of utilising the Mantra for every activity of life whether purely physical or psychological or spiritual. But to understand it in all its implications, even by Sri Aurobindo's interpretative translation of it, is not so easy; he says that from his interpretative translation one "will expect only to seize the general trend and surface suggestions of the Vedic hymns. More would be hardly possible. To enter into the very heart of the mystic doctrine, we must ourselves have trod the ancient paths and

renewed the lost descipline, the forgotten experience. And which of us can hope to do that witht any depth or living power?" (*Ibid:* page 421.) If we have to know the true connection between the Rig Veda and the other Vedas and the natural development of the Rig Veda's original symbolism through all its changes, gradual and sudden, to the later but different symbolism of the Brahmanas[1], if we have also to know the connection between the spiritual philosophy contained in the Vedas and the later development of the same philosophy as contained in the Upanishads, maybe we must tread that ancient path of the Rig Vedic Rishis and renew the lost descipline and the forgotten experience of theirs; for all the changes and development of the Rig Vedic period to the Brahmanic period and their connection with each other forms part of a real history. Yet since Sri Aurobindo has given us key sentences here and there in his writings which might serve us as clues to find out the connection between the details of the outward ritual in the Rig Vedic period and the inner force working through them;—also the symbolic meanings of certain key words by which we can know the spiritual and psychological truths behind the word;—we, with an opening to the New Light brought down by the Mother, may hope to unveil these things a little more. Between the primary creative period of the Rig Vedic Rishis through their Mantras and methods of sacrificial rites and the secondary creative period of the Brahmanic Rishis, who may perhaps be called, only exegists of the Mantras, are found traces of a literature, such as Itihasas, Puranas, Gathas and Nrisamsas; these being considered perhaps more or less secular were not embodied either in the Vedic canon or in the Brahmanic canon, and have therefore disappeared. If these were there, they would have seved us as complete data of the whole history. What is left of this "secular literature" in Brahmanas is not quite reliable. Sri Aurobindo says: "The Brahmanas labour to fix and preserve the minutiae of the Vedic ceremony, the conditions of their material effectuality, the symbolic sense and purpose of their different parts, movements, implements, the significance of texts important in the ritual, the ritual, the drift of obscure allusions, the memory of ancient myths and traditions. Many of their legends are evidently posterior to the hymns, invented to explain passages which were no longer understood; others may have been part of the apparatus of original myth and parable employed by the ancient symbolists or memories of the actual historical circumstances surrounding the composition of the hymns. Oral tradition is always a light that obscures; a new symbolism working upon an old that is half lost, is likely to overgrow rather than

[1] It is by the symbolism of the Brahmanas that Sayana has tried to give the ritualistic meaning to the Vedas, whereas the ritual of the period of the Brahmanas seems to be altogether different from the ritual of the Rig Vedic period.

reveal it; therefore the Brahmanas, though full of interesting hints, help us very little in our research; nor are they a safe guide to the meaning of separate texts when they attempt an exact and verbal interpretation." (*Ibid:* pages 15, 16.)

Finally we have to know something of the Rishi. From all that has been said of the Mantra and the sacrifice, the Rishi who lived in the far off ages, which Sri Aurobindo says must be of an "enormous antiquity" (Page 20), and at which period, according to the modern theory, only savage man could have lived,—he, the Rishi must be an exceptionally supernormal man, far above the greatest men of the modern ages, or he must be altogether of a different species of man, a superhuman being, or a divine being who is to man in his inner consciousness what man is to the animal. That by a conscious evolution of nature in man, the future Superman will arrive may perhaps be admited by us moderns; but by what process of evolution did the Rishi arrive on the face of the earth during those savage ages; this would be a dilemma to those who have been brought up in the most advanced modern thought. The facts are there, the results are patent and we cannot deny them. The truth of the Veda reveals it, and these species of Rishis, half-divine and half-human, owe their existence to the Sapta Rishis of some previous cycles. Sri Krishna says in the Gita that these "Great Rishis, the seven Ancients of the world, and also the four Manus, are my mental becomings. From them are all these living creatures of the world." (X-6). Sri Aurobindo, commenting on this sloka, says about the seven Rishis that they are the "Creators of all this life that depends on manifest or latent mind for its action." (*Essays on the Gita*, page 308.) Evidently "all this life..." includes animal, bird and man in it. Perhaps we may find in Sri Aurobindo's interpretation of India's ancient texts a logical and intelligible explanation of the phenomena by which these Rishis and through them all these living creatures, animal, bird and man came into existence on earth, through evolutionary cycles of animal and bird existence and human existence with which the scientific theory of evolution has not yet been able fully to cope.

(*To be continued*)

NARAYANA C. REDDY

"CLASSICAL" AND "ROMANTIC"

(An Expansion of Notes given to the First Year Poetry Class at the Sri Aurobindo International University Centre)

WE may hazard the guess that the promise given by modern English Romanticism will be fulfilled most perfectly if certain recent glowings of the mystical in English poetry blend with influences of a spiritually resurgent India to seize most intimately on the soul of that Movement and carry it beyond the Spirit's dawn-fiush known to it in the old days. The mind at work in it rose suddenly from a submerged racial being which, whatever developments in its own line may be attained by it in a later England or even Europe, seems to have little chance to arrive at utter completion within the context of psychological race-factors dominant at present in the West.

This mind, revolting against the superficiality of the eighteenth century's pseudo-Classicism, was not a direct continuation of the intellectuality developed by Milton after the Metaphysicals had partly freed themselves from the Elizabethan Life Force though without quite passing beyond its quivering nerves and therefore without acquiring properly the typical qualities of the creative Intelligence. In the field of the true intellectuality brought forth by Milton, "a larger development would have set before it the aim," says Sri Aurobindo, "of a richer, deeper, wider, more curious intellectual humanism, poetic, artistic, many-sided, endeavouring to reach by the poetic reason the ascertainable truth of God and man and Nature. To that eventually, following the main stream of European thought and culture, English poetry turned for a time in the intellectual fullness of the nineteenth century; that too was more indistinctly the half-conscious drift of the slow transitional movement which intervenes between Pope and Wordsworth."

Among the Romantics themselves there is a pointer to it in the work of Keats. Sri Aurobindo has some interesting remarks on it. He considers Keats and Shelley, as "perhaps the two most purely poetic minds that have used the English tongue; but one sings from the skies earthwards, the other looks from earth towards Olympus. Keats is the first entire artist in word and rhythm in English poetry,—not grandiose, classical and derived like Milton, but direct and original in his artistry, he begins a new era....Alone of all the chief poets of his time he is in possession of a perfect or almost perfected instrument of

his native temperament and genius, but he had not yet found the thing he had to say, not even yet seen what he was striving to see. All the other high things that interested his great equals had for him no interest; one godhead only he worshipped, the image of divine Beauty, and through this alone he wished to see Truth and by her to achieve spiritual delight and not so much freedom as completeness. And he saw her in three of her four forms, sensuous beauty, imaginative beauty, intellectual and ideal beauty. But it is the first only which he had entirely expressed when his thread was cut short in its beginning; the second he had carried far, but it was not yet full-orbed; towards the third and highest he was only striving, 'to philosophise he dared not yet', but it was from the first the real sense and goal of his genius." Not in *Lamia*, *Isabella*, *The Eve of St. Agnes*, not even in the great Odes does Sri Aurobindo see the real soul of Keats: this soul "lay in that attempt which, first failing in *Endymion*, was again resumed in *Hyperion*. It was the discovery of the divine Idea, Power and living norm of Beauty which by its breath of delight has created the universe, supports it and moves towards a greater perfection, inspires the harmonies of inward sight and outward form, yearns and strives towards the fullness of its own self-discovery by love and delight." By "the intimation of it in his work, his growing endeavour to find it and the unfulfilled promise of its discovery and unique fullness of expression" Keats belongs in spirit to the "prophetic but half-foiled singers" of the dawn of mysticism that was the English Romantic Movement. Yet he prepares another epoch than that of mystical Romanticism. Not having had time before his too early death to find his way into the deepest sanctuary of the secret temple of ideal Beauty entered by him, what stood out as most effectively and cumulatively Keatsian was "a rich, artistic and sensuous poetical speech." It is as if the spiritual seeking of the age stopped abruptly short and prepared to fall down a multi-coloured incline to "a subsequent poetry which turns from it to seek poetic Truth of pleasure through the senses and an artistic or curiously observing or finely psychologising intellectualism"—the poetry of the Victorians.

The work of these poets is sometimes considered a continuation of Romanticism and indeed it is "opened up to some mountain-top prospects, struck across by some moments of prophecy" which recall the achievements of their predecessors. But, on the whole, Romanticism is felt only in the form of this work, not in its spirit; or else the spirit keeps the shadow of Romanticism, not the substance. And the sheer poetic inspiration is also much less. Sri Aurobindo writes: "The descent from the uncertain but high elevations of the first romantic, half spiritual outbreak is very marked, baffling and sudden. This is not in the nature of a revolt, an energetic audacity of some new thing,—except for a moment in Swinburne,—but a change of levels, a transition to other more varied

but less elevated interests, the substitution of a more curious but less impetuous movement. The rich beauty of Keats is replaced by the careful opulent cultivated picturesquesness of Tennyson, the concentrated personal force of Byron by the many-sided intellectual robustness and energy of Browning, the intense Nature poetry and the strong and grave ethical turn of Wordsworth by the too intellectually conscious eye on Nature and the cultured moralising of Arnold, the pure ethereal lyricism of Shelley by Swinburne's turgid lyrical surge and all too self-conscient fury of foam-tossing sound, and in place of the supernatural visions of Blake and Coleridge we have the mediaeval glamour and languourous fields of dream of Rossetti and Morris."

The Victorians, however, are much closer to the soul of the new Romanticism than are those who preceded it. The intellectual endeavour in the immediate predecessors was "paltry, narrow and elegantly null", the poetic sight a power of making abstractions pointed by rhetorical means. One of the best passages in Pope is—interestingly enough—on a kind of Pantheism:

All are but parts of one stupendous whole,
Whose body Nature is, and God the soul;
That, changed through all, and yet in all the same;
Great in the earth as in the ethereal frame;
Warms in the sun, refreshes in the breeze,
Glows in the stars, and blossoms in the trees,
Lives through all life, extends through all exftent,
Spreads undivided, operates unspent;
Breathes in our soul, informs our mortal part,
As full, as perfect, in a hair as heart;
As full, as perfect, in vile Man that mourns,
As the rapt Seraph that adores and burns:
To him no high, no low, no great, no small;
He fills, he bounds, connects and equals all.

The lines are undeniably effective and are poetic by just managing to bring in some element of rhythmic emotion and vision, but there is a preponderance of thought and sentiment over the really imaginative "feeling intellect", save in the phrase about the "rapt seraph" and perhaps in the terminal couplet. Also, the rhetoric by its too sweeping tone falsifies somewhat the truth expressed. We have only to hark back to the passage from Wordsworth already quoted as his most philosophical statement on Pantheism, to appreciate the change the Romantic vision introduces into the poetry: he is talking of "an active Principle" assigned to "every Form of being":

howe'er removed
From sense and observation, it subsists
In all things, in all natures; in the stars
Of azure heaven, the unenduring clouds,
In flower and tree, in every pebbly stone
That paves the brooks, the stationary rocks,
The moving waters, and the invisible air.
Whate'er exists hath properties that spread
Beyond itself, communicating good,
A simple blessing, or with evil mixed;
Spirit that knows no insulated spot,
No chasm, no solitude; from link to link
It circulates, the Soul of all the worlds.
This is the freedom of the universe.

Portions of this are still not the imagination freely on the wing, the mind of prose drags at it here and there; yet the poetic breath blows authentically in every line, and, like the soul of whom Wordsworth speaks, joins all together and uplifts even the heaviest phrase into a whole of true vision charged with a "feel" of Pantheism and not merely an idea of it: depths in us are stirred and an inner sight is opened. In passages where Wordsworth is most Wordsworthian the impact both poetic and pantheistic is more intensely unlike anything an eighteenth-century thinker in verse could couplet out; for Wordsworth has not only a finer poetic gift but lives more genuinely in the heart of what he poetises. Pantheism is to him an entry by his own subjective self into the Universal Spirit whose body is Nature:

many an hour in caves forlorn,
And mid the hollow depths of naked crags
He sate, and even in their fixed lineaments,
Or from the power of a peculiar eye,
Or by creative feeling overborne,
Or by predominance of thought oppressed,
Even in their fixed and steady lineaments
He traced an ebbing and a flowing mind,
Expression ever varying!

Again, he has touched the Universal Spirit by exceeding the body-sense not only outwards but also inwards, plunging towards the profundities of the Self of selves. That is why he has written, uttering what to the ordinary religious mind of his time must have struck as a blasphemy:

For I must tread on shadowy ground, must sink
Deep—and, aloft ascending, breathe in worlds
To which the heaven of heavens is but a veil.
All strength—all terror, single or in bands,
That ever was put forth in personal form—
Jehovah—with his thunder and his choir
Of shouting Angels, and the empyreal thrones—
I pass them unalarmed. Not chaos, not
The darkest pit of lowest Erebus,
Nor aught of blinder vacancy, scooped out
By help of dreams—can breed such fear and awe
As fall upon us often when we look
Into our Minds, into the Mind of Man—
My haunt, and the main region of my song.

The poetic tone, though not the idea and feeling, is here akin to Milton's and indeed Wordsworth wrote the passage after remembering Milton's invocation to Urania, one of the grandest by that Puritan poet:

...Thou with eternal wisdom didst converse,
Wisdom thy sister, and with her didst play
In presence of the Almighty Father, pleased
With thy celestial song. Up led by thee
Into the heaven of heavens I have presumed,
An earthly guest, and drawn empyreal air,
Thy tempering; and with like safety guided down
Return me to my native element:
Lest from this flying steed unreined, (as once
Bellerophon, though from a lower clime)
Dismounted, on the Aleian field I fall
Erroneous, there to wander and forlorn.
Half yet remains unsung, but narrower bound
Within the visible diurnal sphere;
Standing on earth, not rapt above the pole,
More safe I sing with mortal voice, unchanged
To hoarse or mute, though fallen on evil days,
On evil days though fallen, and evil tongues;
In darkness, and with dangers compassed round,
And solitude; yet not alone, while thou
Visit'st my slumbers, nightly, or when morn

Purples the east: still govern thou my song,
Urania, and fit audience find, though few.

All the Romantics of Wordsworth's time, and not he only, were admirers of Milton and reflected something of his manner the moment they ceased to be directly lyrical. But, while Milton at his best is superb, his mind is more external than theirs. Even Byron who is the most external among them has at times a speech with a keener edge of bright inner perception about it than Milton, though in sheer poetic quality he is on the whole nowhere near him. Thus the hail of Milton's Satan to the infernal regions to which he is condemned is from

Immortal vigour, though oppressed and fallen

and from

one who brings
A mind not to be changed by place or time.
The mind is its own place and in itself
Can make a Heaven of Hell, a Hell of Heaven.

But Byron presents the dreadful greatness of the fallen Archangel in one swift forcible concentrated phrase:

his eye
Glared forth the immortality of Hell.

Again, Milton is unsurpassably powerful in conveying the terribleness of Satan's fall and punishment:

Him the Almighty power
Hurled headlong flaming from the ethereal sky
With hideous ruin and combustion down
To bottomless perdition, there to dwell
In adamantine chains and penal fire,
Who durst defy the Omnipotent to arms.

Yet we should hope in vain from him for the fearful preternatural imaginativeness of the lines where Byron shadows out his Manfred's unspeakable guilt:

a tyrant spell
Which had its birthplace in a star condemned,
The burning wreck of a demolished world,
A wandering hell in the eternal space.

The mind of the later Romantics is freer from the limits of a Classicism of the inspired reason looking outwards: a subtler sweep is in it not only of

rhythm but also of vision and aspiration. Con those words of the Lord of Pandemonium:

> What though the field be lost?
> All is not lost; the unconquerable will,
> And study of revenge, immortal hate,
> And courage never to submit or yield...

In their own context the words are a monstrous defiance of Heaven, but let us for the moment put aside their use by Satan and concentrate only on the essence of power in them, by which the apparently defeated transcends defeat. There is yet something in the psychological movement which, despite the motive of defeat-transcendence, is narrow in imagination and rigid in emotion, as compared with Wordsworth's profoundly stirring visionary assurance to the Negro liberator of Haiti, Toussant L'Ouverture, in the day of his downfall:

> Thou hast great allies;
> Thy friends are exultations, agonies,
> And love, and man's unconquerable mind.

The same can be said in comparison with Shelley's passionately noble conclusion to his drama about Prometheus in revolt against all autocracy of the Magnified Ego whether by a human king or a priest-conceived God of wrath and terror:

> To suffer woes which Hope thinks infinite;
> To forgive wrongs darker than death or night;
> To defy Power, which seems omnipotent;
> To love, and bear; to hope till hope creates
> From its own wreck the thing it contemplates;
> Neither to change, nor falter, nor repent;
> This, like thy glory, Titan, is to be
> Good, great and joyous, beautiful and free;
> This is alone Life, Joy, Empire and Victory.

Almost everywhere in the best Romanticism of the early nineteenth century we can trace the pulsing of pinions more subtle than any that Classicism could unfold in its habitual soars. The pulsing has diverse moods behind it, but there goes with it the same rarefied puissance. We have this puissance in Coleridge's excitement:

> The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew,
> The furrow followed free,

We were the first who ever burst
Into that silent sea—

in Shelley's pensiveness:

We look before and after,
And pine for what is not;
Our sincerest laughter
With some pain is fraught;
Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought—

in Keats's wonder:

Or like strout Cortez when with eagle eyes
He stared at the Pacific—and all his men
Looked at each other with a wild surmise—
Silent, upon a peak in Darien—

in Wordsworth's delicacy:

The stars of midnight shall be dear
To her; and she shall lean her ear
In many a secret place
Where rivulets dance their wayward round,
And beauty born of murmuring sound
Shall pass into her face—

even in Byron's sentimentalism:

So, we'll go no more a-roving
So late into the night,
Though the heart be still as loving,
And the moon be still as bright.

For the sword outwears its sheath,
And the soul wears out the breast,
And the heart must pause to breathe,
And love itself have rest.

On the Continent the Romantic imagination is both less ethereal and less audacious. The typical French mind, even while revolting from Classicism, retained something of the Classical manner. Edmund Wilson has an acute comment here: "It is enlightening to compare Shelley's lyric which begins 'O World! O Life! O Time!' with the poem of Alfred de Musset's which begins 'J'ai

perdu ma force et ma vie'. These two lyrics are in some ways curiously similar: each is the breath of a Romantic sigh over the passing of the pride of youth. Yet the French poet, even in his wistfulness, makes epigrammatic points: his language is always logical and precise; whereas the English poet is vague and gives us images unrelated by logic. And it will not be till the advent of the Symbolists that French poetry will really become capable of the fantasy and fluidity of English."

German Romanticism, on the other hand, is vague enough, but there is not much luminosity in its cloudiness and whatever thrill of ecstasy it has is more morbid, more nihilistic. Bowra quotes Novalis's letter to Caroline Schlegel in this connection: "I know that imagination is most attracted by what is most immoral, most animal; but I know how like a dream all imagination is, how it loves night, meaninglessness, and solitude." Bowra's comment is: "This was not what the English Romantics thought. They believed that the imagination stands in some essential relation to truth and reality, and they were at pains to make their poetry pay attention to them." For the rest, the German Romantics made unsatisfied longing an end in itself and gave a large part in their minds to belief in hallucination and magic—things which the English Romantics put in a secondary place and mostly absorbed into a higher motive.

But even on the Continent a stir of rarefied puissance is occasionally at work and its presence is felt in moments of wistful fancy from Heine:

Ein Fichtenbaum steht einsam
Im Norden auf Kahler Höh.
Ihn schläfert; mit weiszer Decke
Umhüllen ihn Eis und Schnee.
Er träumt von einer Palme,
Die, fern im Morgenland,
Einsam und schweigend trauert
Auf brennender Felsenwand.

On a bare northern hillside
A lonely fir-tree grows,
Nodding in its white mantle
Of ice and driven snows.
And of a palm its dream is
That sorrows, mute, alone,
In some far land of morning
On hills of burning stone.

(*Lucas*)

It brushes past us when love in Hugo defies time:

Votre aile en le heurtant ne fera rien répandre
Du vase, où je m'abreuve et que j'ai bien rempli.
Mon âme a plus de feu que vous n'avez de cendre;
Mon cœur a plus d'amour que vous n'avez d'oubli.

Your flying wings may smite, but never can they dash
The cup which I have brimmed and where my lips I wet.
My heart has far more fire than you can dim with ash,
My soul more love than you can make my soul forget. (*K. D. S.*)

A breath of it is on us when his Gastibelza ends that song of pathos and ardour about Doña Sabine:

...la nuit gagne
Le Mont Falou—
Le vent qui vient à travers la montagne
Me rendra fou!

...over high Falou now
Night hangs her sway—
The wind that comes across the mountain will blow
My wits away! (*K. D. S.*)

It is the indefinite atmosphere of the scene in Musset,

Où le mer vient mourir sur une plage endormie.

Where the sea comes to die on a shore asleep. (*K. D. S.*)

Anything like this—and much more what English Romanticism gives us—is enough to show up the grosser body of the Miltonic flight. And where the intense subtlety becomes an explicit or suggestive spirituality the bounded nature of that flight is painfully obvious, no matter if the organic artistry of it be unimpeachable. Follow sensitively the beat of that celebrated apostrophe in *Paradise Lost*:

Hail, holy light, offspring of Heaven first-born!...
Bright essence of bright effluence increate!

and now trace the motion of mind and language in Wordsworth's line:

> The light that never was, on sea or land,

or his

> a sense sublime
> Of something far more deeply interfused,
> Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,

or else Shelley's

> That Light whose smile kindles the universe,

or his

> Heaven's light for ever shines, earth's shadows fly;
> Life like a dome of many-coloured glass
> Stains the white radiance of eternity...

There is a mystical quickening which makes the intellect of these Romantics a medium of inspiration quite dissimilar to that of the Classical poets. Even a mystical mood in Milton—

> thou, Celestial Light,
> Shine inward, and the mind through all her powers
> Irradiate, there plant eyes, all mist from thence
> Purge and disperse, that I may see and tell
> Of things invisible to mortal sight—

has too external a tone, too thought-out a formulation. Wordsworth, in a far shorter phrase, can suggest most illuminatively the mystical mood by speaking not even of supramundane things but of mere daffodils remembered:

> They flash upon that inward eye
> Which is the bliss of solitude.

The same intellectual externality, though never superficiality, may be contrasted in the verse where Milton faintly mixes the "pantheistic" with the "gnostic"—

> Thou Sun, of this great World both eye and soul—

to Shelley's still intellectual yet profoundly pregnant phrase put into the mouth of the Sun-Spirit:

I am the Eye with which the universe
Beholds itself and knows itself divine.

Milton's religious intellectuality as differentiated from the intellectuality living in a mystical atmosphere is too patent in his exhortation to all natural powers to declare God's greatness: when he comes to the Winds and Pines he says:

His praise, ye Winds, that from four quarters blow,
Breathe soft or loud, and wave your tops, ye Pines,
With every Plant, in sign of worship wave.

But how intensely inward with a transcendent atmosphere without even breathing of God's name is Wordsworth's response to outward Nature—

The Winds come to me from the fields of sleep.

Not that Milton is utterly devoid of the true spiritual inspiration: a touch of it enters the rhythm of the summons to every creature to extol

Him first, Him last, Him midst, and without end,

and in one line the topmost spiritual height is caught—

Those thoughts that wander through Eternity—

but the height seems in its own context not quite conscious of the empyrean it inhabits, while Wordsworth without referring to eternity can give us in his picture of the mind of the scientist Newton a concrete "feel" of unknown spiritual widenesses—

a mind for ever
Voyaging through strange seas of thought, alone.

And there is a dissimilarity in the way the spiritual substance and rhythm come in: what is somewhat absent in the Miltonic reception of the supra-intellectual is an intimate thrill of it which the later Romantics sometimes have, despite their mental expression where intimacy and thrilling of any kind are less natural

than to vital speech. The Classical Milton, passing from the religious to the mystical, gets on rare occasions the thought-mind magnificently uplifted, but there is not the play of an illuminative intuition in the very grain of the substance and the very texture of the rhythm. This visionary "feel", though arising out of the Creative Intelligence rather than from the Creative Life Force as in Shakespeare, yet "recovers and holds as its central secret something akin to the older poet, a greater straight impact and natural body of intuitive intensity" than Milton can command.

We may here quote some passages by Sri Aurobindo on the nature of poetry and on Shakespeare and this recovery at times by the later Romantics of the main power of his peculiar poetic penetrativeness. All genuine poetry, according to Sri Aurobindo, has its origin in a plane of our being above and beyond our personal intelligence, a region of superconsciousness where things are seen in "their innermost and largest truth by a spiritual identity and with a lustrous effulgency and rapture and its native language is a revelatory, inspired, intuitive word limpid or subtly vibrant or densely packed with the glory of this ecstasy and lustre." It is the inrush of this superconscious glory into brain and heart and nerve that creates the psychological phenomenon noted from of old as poetic inspiration. But rarely does the supreme significant word come direct and unaltered: ordinarily there is, as it were, a cloud of formless light from which we have to disengage or reshape substance and speech with the help of our own faculties while they are excited by the influx from above. The influx plunges first into "an intuitive self hid in the depth of each of our parts of being, hid in sense, life, heart, mind". This self is the transmitting agent, a subliminal secrecy, through which the inspiration emerges into one or another part of our composite psychology that happens to be habitually dominant in us. The more these parts are near and awake to the subliminal soul-mind, the more intuitive the utterance within our subtle-physical or our vital or our intellectual consciousness. And the more the secrecy that is the transmitting agent breaks open outward, the greater the body of the superconscious sight and rhythm in our utterance.

The transmitted sight and rhythm may be overtly mystical or no: the sheer poetic quality is not affected, for this quality is determined not by overt mysticism but by the intuitiveness of expressive turn. And it is by being thus intuitive in superabundance that Shakespeare is well-nigh the most remarkable poet the world has seen: the secret of his pre-eminence is the intuitive seizing again and again of the word from the very heart of the thing seen. English poetry after him, by getting intellectualised, lost much of this power, though in Milton it gained a more dynamic amplitude of imaginative thought as distinguished from imaginative sensation and emotion. The later Romantics have often a clear, strong, large and luminous manner, but by functioning from the more

deliberative mental rather than the more spontaneous vital plane they too lack comparatively in "the searching audacities of the intuition". Still, now and then, there emerges, as Sri Aurobindo puts it, "a certain effort to recapture the Shakespearian potency and intensity accompanied by a new and higher element in the workings of the inspiration. When we try to put a name on it...we can see that this is an attempt to return to the fullness and the awakening turn of the direct intuitive expression on a subtler and more ethereal level." Sri Aurobindo cites as successes in this effort some lines of Keats

> The journey homeward to habitual self,

and

> ...Solitary thinkings such as dodge
> Conception to the very bourne of heaven,
> Then leave the naked brain.

"These lines of Keats," he observes, "are Shakespearian in their quality, they have recovered the direct revealing word and intimate image of the full intuitive manner, but they enter into a world of thought and inner truth other than Shakespeare's; by the passage through the detaching intellect and beyond it they have got to the borders of the realm of another and greater self than the life-self, though there we include and take up life into the deeper self-vision."

The new intensity has a thrill of imaginative sight and sound unlike that of even whatever mystical suggestion may occur accidentally in Shakespeare. Not only is the thrill different from the more obvious kind of suggestion like the lines with a hint analogous to the second Keats-quotation's—the question asked by Hamlet to his father's ghost about his appearing as he does,

> So horridly to shake our disposition
> With thoughts beyond the reaches of our souls.

The thrill differs also from mystical-seeming suggestions at their keenest, either through an impetuosity of human love—

> Eternity was in our lips and eyes,
> Bliss in our brows' bent, none our parts so poor
> But was a race of heaven—

or through an imaginative sensation's indefinite depth as of "strange seas"—

> In the dark backward and abysm of time.

Here, as everywhere else in the old Romanticism, "the vision is felt through the vital mind and heart before it finds expression": the later Romantics, whether

in their simplicities or in their richnesses, make their revelations through the intellectualised consciousness which, "observing life from above, is in itself a higher thing than the vital and emotional mind which responds more immediately and powerfully to life but is caught in its bonds", and out of a sublimation or intensification of this consciousness, neighbour of mightier and profounder realities, "there comes in some absolute moments a native voice of the Spirit".

In European poetry of the time the spiritual note is also heard here and there. The greatest figure of Italian Romanticism, Leopardi, was a kind of paradox, for he made a cult of classicism and hated the word "Romantic", understanding by it Mediaeval trappings such as his father had immured him amongst during his boyhood. But there was in him not only a queer blend of the emotional Byronic despair and the Stoic defiance of a Vigny: there was also the belief in the bursting of great truths with startling suddenness and ecstatic vividness over which the mind has little control and there was the desire to feel (*sentito*) as well as know (*conosceva*) the truth. However, where the English Romantics felt a positive divinity everywhere, Leopardi had the living sense of an Infinite Nothing which he embraced with an unflinching gusto. This Nothing makes for him all life endless filth and frustration; but a hint is found in a few places in his work that that is because the human ego is imprisoned in its desires. If the ego could stand bare and free, the Nothing might be what, watching once a solitary hill and a far hedge screening the the horizon, he seemed to apprehend—space beyond space and "supernal silence and unfathomed peace" measured, as it were, by the wind's murmur among the leaves nearby. Time present and time past are caught up into timelessness:

...Cosi tra questa
Immensita s'annega il pensier mio:
E il naufragar m'è dolce in questo mare.

...So
In this immensity my thought is drowned
And sweet to me is shipwreck in this sea. (*Bickersteth*)

A still greater figure on the Continent, Goethe, with all his urge towards Classicism in the years of his maturity, cannot also escape the Romantic drive towards "things not easily expressible" and one of his best-known passages not only suggests the inexpressible but counts name-giving to be unimportant, even reprehensible: it is the pantheistic reply of Faust when asked if he believes in God. It ends:

Und drangt night alles
Nach Haupt und Herzen dir,
Und webt in ewigem Geheimnis
Unsichtbar sichtbar neben dir?
Erfüll davon dein Herz, so groß es ist,
Und wenn du ganz in dem gefühle selig bist,
Nenn es dann, wie du willst,
Nenns Glück! Herz! Liebe! Gott!
Ich habe keinen Namen
Dafür! Gefühle is alles;
Name ist Schall une Rauch,
Umnebelud Himmelsglut.
Does not the whole world press
Into your heart and brain,
And the eternal secret float
Round you, hidden and plain?
Fill to the brim your soul
From that full blessedness,
Then name it as you will,
Love, Rapture, God!
I have no name for it, none,
The heart is all, and the name
Nothing but clamour and smoke
Clouding the glow of the sky.

(*Helen Stawell and G. Lowes-Dickinson*)

Spoken by a lover, the passage is more Shelleyan than Wordsworthian, but it compasses too the essence of Wordsworth's feeling, in a more excited voice than his—the feeling, for instance, in those lines that close the description of "the growing Youth" watching from the naked top of a bold headland the sun rise and bathe the world in light:

...Far and wide the clouds were touched,
And in their silent faces could he read
Unutterable love. Sound needed none,
Nor any voice of joy; his spirit drank
The spectacle: sensation, soul and form,
All melted into him; they swallowed up
His animal being; in them did he live,
And by them did he live; they were his life.

In such access of mind, in such high hour
Of visitation from the living God,
Thought was not; in enjoyment it expired.
No thanks he breathed, he proffered no request;
Rapt into still communion that transcends
The imperfect offices of prayer and praise,
His mind was a thanksgiving to the powers
That made him; it was blessedness and love!

Another passage worth quoting from Goethe is the conclusion of *Faust*—words at once weighty and winged, in which several Romantic elements reach a fine spiritualisation through the idealistic intellect:

Alles Vergängliche
Ist nur ein Gleichnis;
Das Unzulängliche,
Hier wird's Ereignis;
Das Unbeschreibliche,
Hier ist's gethan,
Das Ewig-weibliche
Zieht uns hinan.

All things that pass
Are symbols alone;
Here into Fullness
Each failure is grown;
Here the Untellable
Crowns all endeavour,
The Eternal Feminine
Leads onward for ever.

(*K.D.S.*)

And it was Goethe who stated perhaps most clearly the non-exclusiveness of the Romantic Pantheism, the complexity of it which did not set it over against other "isms" about God. He wrote to Jacobi: "I cannot be satisfied with only one way of thinking. As a poet and artist I am a polytheist, as a scientific investigator a pantheist, and one just as much as the other. If I need a God for my life as a moral person, there is provision for that also. Things in heaven and earth form a kingdom so wide that only all the organs of all beings could

grasp it." There is a small inaccuracy here, for Goethe as a poet was a pantheist as well as a polytheist, and most pronouncedly so; but his mention of polytheism is enlightening, casting into relief the experience of all poetic imagination, since that imagination perceives feeling entities everywhere: Wordsworth with his "Presences of Nature" and "Souls of lonely places" was polytheistic no less than pantheistic."

Goethe as the greatest poetic intellect of the age was most aware of the conceptual implications of the spiritual bent in him. But the spiritual cannot be said to lie at his very core and lead at times to a direct visionary intimation of godhead; neither, for all his lavish use of nouns like "Infinity" and "eternity" and "divinity", can it be said to be the most Hugoesque part of Hugo, much less to verge him on concrete mysticism. The reverse is the case with some of the English Romantics. They may fall often into thinness or bareness because of an insufficient development in them of a supporting body to their unusual inspiration, but the spiritual note not only emerges in its true rhythm in some of their utterances but also seems the ultimate centre of their being and the echo of a genuine mystical intuition. If we are asked to name the most Shelleyan lines of Shelley we cannot help quoting.

The desire of the moth for the star,
    Of the night for the morrow,
The longing for something afar
    From the sphere of our sorrow,

and the fragment which he wrote a few months before his death and which is uniquely intense with an aspiration touched by the Ineffable:

I loved—oh, no, I mean not one of ye,
    Or any earthly soul, though ye are dear
As human heart to human heart may be,
    I loved I know not what; but this lone sphere
And all that it contains, contains not thee,
    Thou whom, seen nowhere, I feel everywhere.

Perhaps the most Wordsworthian of Wordsworth's lines are that quatrain,

Love had he found in huts where poor men lie,
His only teachers were the woods and rills,
The silence that is in the starry sky,
The sleep that is among the lonely hills,

and the fragment retrieved by Hugh de Selincourt, not suggesting poignantly like Shelley's a perfect Beyond which is at once here and not here, but magnificently emphasising a single-selfed omnipresent Within:

> One interior life
> In which all beings live with God, themselves
> Are God, existing in the mighty whole,
> As indistinguishable as the cloudless east
> At noon is from the cloudless west, when all
> The hemisphere is one cerulean blue.

(To be continued)

K. D. SETHNA